Doctor C. F. W. Walther

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Doctor Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther

"Ein rechter Friedenstheolog"

Guenther

By the Reverend
D. H. Steffens

Pastor of Martini Evangelical
Lutheran Church, Baltimore

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This page of honor
and affection was written
last that I might inscribe it to
her who has ever been my severest
critic and my kindest friend, my mother

November 10, 1916

Foreword

This little book can hardly be called a biography. It is but an attempt to say in English what has been said so much better in German by Guenther, Koestering, Hochstetter and Graebner. Whatever merit it may possess belongs to them rather than to its author. The desire to make Walther known to English readers is both the apology for and the justification of its having been written. May it inspire the prompt publication of a real biography of "the most commanding figure in the Lutheran Church of America during the nineteenth century."

D. H. Steffens
Pastor of Martini Ev. Luth.
Church, Baltimore

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Chapter 1

Birth and Youth

"Doctor Walther, as is generally known, was the theological leader of the Missouri Synod, and this in a way in which a single man has seldom been the leader of a religious body. Whatever he said, wrote, did, or approved in religious matters was looked upon, unless he himself modified or retracted it (and this was rare) in the Synod, and, accordingly, also outside of it, as if the Synod itself had said, written, done or approved it."

This estimate of the position and influence of Doctor Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther was written, not in praise, but in criticism. As with much other criticism, the fact stated is correct, but the deductions and applications are somewhat beside the mark. It is hardly correct to say that "Whatever Walther said, wrote, did or approved in religious matters was looked upon in the Missouri Synod as if itself had said, written, done or approved it." To say that an entire church body has absolutely given up all right of private judgment and abdicated all in-

dependence of action is a rather sweeping accusation.

On the other hand, it is undoubtedly correct that "Doctor Walther, as is generally known, was the theological leader of the Missouri Synod, and this in a way in which a single man has seldom been the leader of a religious body." If the writing of a biography of this man, who was easily the most commanding figure in the Lutheran Church of America during the nineteenth century, needs any apology or justification, it may be found in this fact.

William Fleming Stevenson, in his delightful little book, "Praying and Working," speaking of Louis Harms, of Hermannsburg, mentions that in Germany pastorates that remain in the family as many as four or five generations are not uncommon, and are regarded as strengthening the affections and respect of the people. Walther's first biographer, Professor Martin Guenther, who was his associate on the theological faculty of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo., therefore does not fail to state in the very first sentence of his book, that "Walther was a descendant of an old family of ministers." His father, his grandfather and his great-grandfather were ministers of the gospel in

the Lutheran Church of Saxony, the home of Luther and the cradle of the Reformation. Professor Guenther quotes biographical notes written by Walther's own hand. "My great-grandfather," he says, "was Moritz Heinrich Walther, of Gladau, in the Magdeburg neighborhood, since 1719 pastor at Oberlungwitz, between Hohenstein and Chemnitz, in the County Schoenburg-Glauchau, died March 2, 1752. Unfortunately, a Chiliast, as may be seen by the 'Unschuldige Nachrichten,' of the year 1728, page 565. His wife was a born Reissing from Hohenstein. His son, my grandfather, was Adolph Heinrich Walther, born at Oberlungwitz, on July 2, 1728, visited the school at Annaberg and the University at Leipzig; in 1752 he became pastor in Gazen, at Pegau, in Saxony, in the 'Stiftsephorie Zeiz,' since 1763 pastor at Langenschursdorf, near Waldenburg, in the princely Kingdom of Saxony. His first wife was Maria Elizabeth, *nee* Wagner, from Burgstadt; the second was Auguste Concordia, *nee* Bonitz, from Lichtenstein. My father was Gottlob Heinrich Wilhelm Walther, late pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church at Langenschursdorf, near Waldenburg, in the principality of Schoenburg-Waldenburg, in the Kingdom of

Saxony; born there November 15, 1770, and died there January 13, in the year 1841. My mother was Frau Johanna Wilhelminia Walther, *nee* Zschenderlein, from Zwickau, in the Kingdom of Saxony, who died in the year 1851, at Kleinhartsmannsdorf, near Frauenstein, in Saxony, with my sister, the married Frau Pastor Julie Wilhelmi."

From which it appears that Walther's father and grandfather both held the same pastorate, the latter having died in the place of his birth, the Langenschursdorf parsonage, where our Walther was born October 25, 1811, just two years before Napoleon Bonaparte met his first defeat at the battle of Leipzig (October 16-19, 1813). He was the eighth child and the fourth son in a family of twelve. His oldest brother died while an infant; the second at the age of six. The third brother, Otto Hermann Walther, true to family traditions, became his father's vicar at Langenschursdorf in 1834. He was born September 23, 1809, and died as the first pastor of Trinity Congregation, St. Louis, January 21, 1841; for he, too, had resigned the pastorate so long held by his father and grandfather to come to America with the Saxon colony in 1839. Otto Hermann Walther is said to have been an exceptionally

gifted and earnest man, a faithful servant of Christ, his Master, whom he preached with power and manifest blessing both in Langenschursdorf and the Saxon congregation at St. Louis. When he had made up his mind to come to America, the Prince of Schoenburg-Waldenburg offered him passage money for the round trip, if only he would promise to promptly return to his home. The real founder and leader of the St. Louis congregation during the trying days which followed the exposure of Stephan, his death, at the age of only thirty-one, was mourned by the entire colony.

There was also a younger sister among the Saxon emigrants, Amalie Ernstine, who, in 1836, married Pastor E. G. W. Keyl, at that time pastor in Niederfrohua, Saxony, and afterwards pastor of the first Missouri Synod Church in Baltimore, Md.

If heredity, environment and traditions make for character, there was no lack of them in the case of the Walthers. Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm could hardly have been anything else than a minister of the gospel, although his first youthful ambition was to become a great musician. Under the date of February 8, 1829, when he was a little over seventeen years old, he wrote in his diary:

"I feel myself to be born for nothing but for music." We may judge of his father's character by his attitude on this matter. "If you wish to become a musician," said the sturdy old gentleman, "you may see how you get along. But if you wish to study theology, I will give you a thaler every week." Walther studied theology, not for the sake of the thaler, but because God designed that he should be a chosen vessel for the upbuilding of His Church in America. Still, like Luther, Walther never lost his love of music. To the day of his death he delighted to sit at the keyboard of a church organ and lead the congregational singing of our magnificent chorale, which he usually played from memory with no other help than the hymnal containing only the words of the hymns.

There must also have been an appreciation of Christian art in the parental home of Walther, as in most parsonages of Germany, for he never lost his love of literature and the biblical paintings of men like Bendemann, who, by the way, was also born in 1811. With all of this there was no lack of wholesome discipline and home training in the Langenschursdorf parsonage. A breach of good manners, like seating yourself uninvited on that most important piece of furni-

ture in every German home, the living-room sofa, called for prompt and severe punishment, as Carl Ferdinand once found to his cost. On the other hand, silly affectation and effeminate manners in a young man were most repugnant to Walther's father, who was fond of telling his sons, "*Ein junger mann viel leiden muss, 'eh' aus ihm wird ein dominus,*"—"A young man must bear many trials before out of him is made a Sir." The children had a mighty respect for their father, and they hardly dared accost him. Despite all outward severity, he was a most affectionate parent, who spared neither time nor money in his efforts to give his children a good education. A family anecdote illustrates this side of his character. In Saxony, as in some other parts of Germany, "Pelznickel," or St. Nicholas, visits the homes before Christmas to inquire if the children have been well-behaved and have studied their lessons, so that the Christ-child may bring them gifts. At these visits "Pelznickel" holds a sort of general family inquisition, and every child must not only answer his questions, but recite a poem or a Scripture passage as an evidence of its application at school. When little Ferdinand was three years old, at the occasion of this "Pelz-

nickel" visit, he bravely recited the verse taught as a prayer to all German children:

> "Christ's own blood and righteousness
> My beauty are, my glorious dress;
> With these I may before God stand
> And enter in the promised land."

Papa Walther was so moved that he gave his son a *dreier* (a three-pfennig piece), which made a deep impression upon the boy. He thought this must indeed be a fine verse. Had not his father given him a *dreier* for saying it to "Pelznickel"? Nor was he wrong, for this little rhyme, which was translated and expanded into a hymn by John Wesley, contains the fundamental Lutheran doctrine of justification by faith. Walther never forgot the episode, and the verse accompanied him all through life, even when the rationalistic environment of his early college days threatened to undermine his childhood faith.

After having been taught the elementary branches by his father and the village schoolmaster, he attended the city school at Hohenstein, near Chemnitz, for two years (1819-1821), leaving this school in July, 1821, to enter the Gymnasium at Schneeberg, in the

Saxon Erzgebirge. His brother-in-law, the learned Magister H. F. W. Schubert, who had married his elder sister, was Conrector (Associate Director) at this school, otherwise his parents would hardly have consented to send a child of ten years away from home to a boarding school, although in Germany, as in England, parents are very much less given to sentiment in these matters than we are. The German gymnasium combines our high school and college courses, and it is interesting to note that the so-called colleges of the Missouri Synod, which all bear the name "Concordia," are organized after this plan. Here, however, the students do not enter before they have completed their grammar school work, or after confirmation, which means at about the age of fourteen.

Walther remained at the Schneeberg gymnasium for eight years, or until September 23, 1829. In other words, he finished his college course and was ready to enter the university before he had completed his eighteenth year. His graduation certificate was most complimentary, both as respects his conduct and his attainments. It testifies him to have been "especially worthy" (*"imprimis digmus"*) for admission to the academic studies, and that he never merited the slight-

est reproof. The pastor *primarius* and superintendent at Waldenburg, who wrote him a testimonial under date of November 21, 1829, immediately after his matriculation at the University of Leipzig, recommends "the hopeful youth, Carl Ferdinand Walther, to the favorable attention of his honorable academic teachers, and of other high patrons and promoters of the sciences, as being both worthy and in need, as urgently as respectfully."

There was no question of his being both. His father gave him his weekly "thaler," as he had promised when he expressed his disapproval of Ferdinand's musical ambitions. He also received a cord of wood from a certain foundation, established to aid a number of students in possession of good gymnasium reports. This was the limit of his regular support. How he managed to exist, unless some "high patron and promoter of the sciences" gave heed to the "urgent and respectful" solicitation of the pastor *primarius* of Waldenburg, and came to his aid, is difficult to understand. His poverty must have been extreme, for he did not even own a Bible and he had no money to buy one. Surely this was an astounding predicament for a student of theology, and

at the same time a remarkable characterization of the theological teaching of the university where he was being trained to become a minister of the gospel. Indeed, it is difficult for us to understand how a young man could come up to the university from the gymnasium without a Bible of his own. All becomes plain and simple when we think of the period. Farrar, in his famous Bampton lectures on "The History of Free Thought," characterizes it when he says: "The present course of lectures relates to one of the conflicts exhibited in the history of the Church, viz., the struggle of the human spirit to free itself from the authority of the Christian faith." He should have said, "from the authority of the word of God." Sturdy old Claus Harms, archdeacon at Kiel, who somehow always reminds me of Hugh Latimer, had published his famous Ninety-five Theses on the eve of the three hundredth anniversary of the Reformation and struck a brave blow for Lutheran orthodoxy. But the religious movement, which we call Deism in England, Infidelity in France, and Rationalism in Germany still held sway. The confessional reaction against its blighting influences was not yet organized. Schleiermacher, whom Doc-

tor Krauth, in his "Conservative Reformation," pronounces "the founder of the distinctive theology of the nineteenth century" (page 148), represents only the speculative reaction against Rationalism. With this result: all of the teachers at the Schneeberg gymnasium, during the attendance of Walther, with but a single exception, were outspoken rationalists. "I was eighteen years old when I left the gymnasium," he tells us, "and I had never heard a sentence taken from the word of God out of a believing mouth. I had never had a Bible, neither a catechism, but a miserable 'Leitfaden' (guide or manual), which contained heathen morality."

It was impossible that the boy should altogether escape the influence of such a religious environment. Still he never lost the childhood faith of his early home training in the Holy Scriptures as being God's revealed word, although, as he himself tells us, he had neither knowledge nor experience of that living faith which overcomes the devil, the world and the flesh.

He speaks of this with affecting frankness. In an address, delivered in 1878, speaking of the historical faith which holds the Bible to be God's word, he says: "Through this,

that a man holds the Holy Scriptures to be God's word merely because he was so taught by his parents, namely, through a purely human faith in the same, certainly no man can become righteous before God and saved. Nevertheless, such a purely human faith is an inexpressibly great treasure, yea, a precious, costly gift of the prevenient grace of God. I may in this respect present myself to you as an example. My dear, God-fearing father taught me from childhood that the Bible is God's word. But I soon left my parental home—in my eighth year—to live in unbelieving circles. I did not lose this historical faith. It accompanied me through my life like an angel of God. But I spent my more than eight years of gymnasium life unconverted."

Walther got his Bible. One day, after he was a student of theology at Leipzig University, he was debating with himself whether or not to purchase this book he so much desired to own. He had but a few "groschen" left of the paternal "thaler a week." If he spent them for a Bible, he might be compelled to go hungry for a few days. The temptation to defer the purchase was rather strong. Finally he said to himself: "Why, I am spending the money for

God's word; He will surely help me and not forsake me in my need." Nor was his faith shamed. The very next day a farmer from Langenschursdorf looked him up and informed him that, intending to come to Leipzig, he had stopped at the parsonage to ask his father if he had any message for his son. Papa Walther at first said, "No, not any." Then, stopping to think a moment, he gave him a letter, which he was pleased to deliver. Walther opened his letter and found a "thaler." What is more, he had a stronger faith in Him whose promises cannot fail. And so, on December 9, 1829, we find this entry in his diary: "To-day I read in the Bible, namely, in the Book of the Acts, firstly in order to somewhat orientate myself therein, for as yet very little is known to me of the apostles, and I can hardly repeat their twelve names; secondly, to edify myself by the examples of the workings and manifestations of an unmovable faith." This looks promising. A "thaler" a week, a cord of wood, contentment in poverty, willingness to sacrifice, a desire for the word, a bit of Christian experience, a strengthening of faith, and a study of the heroic deeds of the holy men of God. After Acts comes Romans. Paul will teach us as he taught Luther what

faith is, what it works and how it manifests itself. The *Herr Studiosus* is in a fair way to become a theologian.

Chapter 2

University Environment

But how did this young man who felt himself to be born for nothing else than for music make up his mind to become a student of theology and prepare himself to enter the holy ministry?

His father, true to family traditions, wished his sons to become ministers. While he did not absolutely forbid, he gave no encouragement to Ferdinand's desire to study music. Nor can the "thaler a week" he promised him if he would study theology be looked upon as a sufficient inducement to persuade him to give up a cherished ambition. If need be, he could easily earn that and more by giving music lessons or playing with some orchestra. Neither his father's wishes nor the promise of support determined his choice. There was another and a far more honorable reason. His brother, Otto Hermann, who had now studied theology for two years, coming home to spend his vacation, brought a number of recently published tracts and booklets with him, among them a biography of the famous J. F. Oberlin,

written by G. H. Schubert. The reading of this book made a profound impression upon Ferdinand Walther. He writes in his diary: "I am living quite happy, and philosophizing with my brother upon the most interesting occurrences of our lives, and reading, with real greed, the life of Pastor Oberlin by Schubert; this has filled my whole being and shown that the prospects which a theologian may have are the most beautiful, insomuch as he, if he only will, may create for himself a field of opportunity such as no other man, who chooses some other calling, may ever hope for. The anxious doubt, 'Will you then some day secure an adequate support?' is now completely overcome; for I have imbibed out of this most precious book an immovable confidence in God and a firm faith in His providence and its workings upon our destiny, after I saw this awakened through the conversations with my dear, good brother."

Can there be a finer testimony to the value of Christian biography? God teaches men through the Christian experiences of other men. God led Walther into the service of His Church through the reading of a little book on the life and work of a devoted Christian minister, who faithfully labored

among the peasants of Steinthal in the Vosges Mountains. And so, after a brief vacation of several weeks, Carl Ferdinand Walther went to Leipzig in October, 1829, with his "dear, good brother," Otto Hermann, to matriculate as a theological student.

When Walther entered the university, the so-called "common rationalism," introduced into Germany by the speculative philosophy of Wolf, the importation of the works of the English Deists and the colony of French infidels established in Prussia by Frederick the Great, was at its height. Strauss published his celebrated work on the Life of Christ in 1835. Denying the revealed character of Scripture and treating it as an ordinary history, rationalism explained away the supernatural element, such as miracles, by insisting that they were merely the results of oriental modes of speech. Eichborn, at Goettingen (1752-1827), applied this principle of interpretation to the Old Testament and insisted that the cloud of smoke at Mt. Sinai was a thunder-storm, and the shining of Moses' face a perfectly natural phenomenon. Paulus of Jena extended this principle to the New Testament. According to him the transfiguration was but the confused recollection of sleeping men who had seen

Jesus with two unknown friends in the beautiful light of early morning, the resurrection was the awakening of our Lord from a trance or the semblance of death. The teaching of these men made Jesus to be merely a wise and learned man, His miracles merely acts of skill or chance. As its name implies, rationalism put reason not merely above, but in the place of revelation; insisting that Christianity was not designed to teach divine mysteries but only to confirm the religious teaching of reason. No one, it insisted, ought ever to accept anything as true which was not capable of rational demonstration. Rationalism was thus destructive of all faith. It denied the doctrine of the Trinity. It regarded the death of Christ as an historic event, the death of a moral martyr, who died for his convictions or as a symbol that sacrifices were abolished. Veneration for the word of God was called "Bibliolatry." With this result: Christianity was reduced to a system of natural morality, or, at best, a kind of Socinianism.

Preaching under rationalism became frankly practical and utilitarian. The great inexhaustible themes of the inspired word, repentance, sin, faith, justification, sanctification, salvation by grace were cast aside by

the men who preached to their congregations on themes which might have been suggested by the pithy sayings of Poor Richard's Almanac. Nicolai, in his Sebaldus Nothanker, drew a faithful picture of the average rationalistic preacher, who knew how to make use of a Bible text "as a harmless means for impressing useful truths." Only by so doing was the "utility of the ministerial office" preserved. Thus Sebaldus Nothanker boasts that "he was very studious to preach to his peasant congregations to rise early in the morning, attend carefully to their cows, work in their fields and gardens as well as they could, and to do all this with the view of becoming comfortable and acquiring property." A shallow, selfish morality, in which prudence constituted the principal means, and temporal prosperity the great end of all life, was the unfailing theme of these preachers. There was quite a passion for elaborate sermons and sermon series for special classes of men. There were discourses against law suits and superstition, on the duties of servants, on health, etc. Thus Steinbrenner, in 1804, published a volume of sermons on "The Art of Prolonging Human Life, According to Hufeland's Principles."

The destructive effect of rationalism upon worship has often been described, for instance, by Alt, in his "Christlicher Cultus" (Vol. I, 319, etc.). That the liturgical forms of our Common Service, in which the heroic faith of the sixteenth century had given expression to its trust and emotions were bound to be exceedingly distasteful to these disciples of prosaic enlightenment hardly needs to be said. Where there was no faith in grace and a denial of the possibility of its reception, there were, as a matter of course, no means of grace. The sacraments were held to be nothing but empty ceremonies, to be performed by the enlightened minister only in deference to popular prejudice and emptied of their content and import. Since baptism was a superannuated institution, the enlightened minister felt himself free to sprinkle or pour water upon the head of an infant in the name of "liberty, equality and fraternity," instead of baptizing it in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost. At the administration of the Lord's Supper, it was proposed that he use these words: "Enjoy this bread; may the spirit of worship rest upon you with full blessing. Enjoy a little wine; no virtuous power lies in this wine; it lies in you,

in God's doctrine, and in God," etc. (Hufnagel, *Liturgische Blaetter.*)

Ruthless hands were laid upon our grand old hymns. Their simplicity and poetic feeling were ridiculed. Why have hymns and hymn books at all? Why sing what is not literally true? Why, for instance, in Paul Gerhard's beautiful evening hymn, "Now rest beneath night's shadows," sing the line, "The world in slumber lies"? when every child knows, or should know, that when it is night in our hemisphere it is day in the other. If sung at all, we should say: "Now slumbers half the world." Moreover, besides being literally truthful, hymns like sermons, ought inculcate useful practical lessons on the husbanding of time, on friendship, frugality, temperance, etc.

As for liturgical usages which were merely symbolical or emblematic, without special import for everyday life, they were to be abolished at any cost. Thus Nicolai, who, at Nuremberg, had seen lighted candles on the altar at communion, urged that such a thing could be of no use to anyone but a lamplighter or a sexton. That light might be a symbol of joy, or of the gospel, or of the Light of the world, never entered his enlightened head.

The church year, with its festivals, also went by the board. These rest upon the facts of divine revelation. Since rationalism rendered the facts themselves doubtful, why have a festival to commemorate what, perhaps, had never occurred or was of no practical value if it had occurred? Why celebrate the birth, the sufferings, the death, the resurrection or the ascension of Jesus? The essential thing was to look upon Jesus as the first great Rationalist, who opposed the superstitions and ordinances of the Pharisees, and aided the sound reason of the people to assert itself against them.

Even the Bible itself was amended, revised and re-edited. Luther's pithy, pregnant version no longer suited the taste of the day. "Men like Charles Frederick Bahrdt labored," Hagenbach says, "to make Moses, David, Isaiah, and even Christ Himself, speak as if they had been compelled to preach a trial sermon before the new counselors in the consistories." It would never do to say, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." We must say with Simon Grynaeus of Basel, "God, besides whom there was nothing, made the beginning of all things by the creation of its material."

Such was theological thought and teach-

ing at the universities, such was the preaching and church life in the parishes of Germany when Walther began his study of theology. But it must not be overlooked that the causes which were to introduce new elements into the sluggish current of general public and theological thought, determining the literary and religious movements of the nineteenth century, were already at work. Lessing, the pioneer of modern German literature, died in 1781. His name suggests the "Wolfenbuettel Fragments" and the tremendous controversy aroused by their publication. While his theology, together with that of his coadjutors, hardly rose above that of the more serious of English Deists, he at least made men realize that rationalism had not spoken the last word in literary and theological thought. Kant died in 1804. His great work, "Die Kritik der Reinen Vernunft," appeared in 1781. While its immediate effects were to reinforce the appeal to reason and to destroy revelation by leaving nothing to be revealed, its emphatic assertion of the law of duty gave depth to the moral perceptions, expelled French materialism and illuminism, and exposed the shallow superficiality of the Wolfian philosophy. Kant was followed by

Fichte, Jacobi, Schelling and Hegel, men who struggled to solve the problem of human knowledge from the side of the intellect and the emotions. Lessing was followed by Herder, Wieland, Goethe, Schiller and Jean Paul, men who at the court of Karl August at Weimar produced the golden age of German literature. The cold classicism of these writers was supplemented by the Romanticists, Stolberg, the Schlegels, Tieck and Novalis, who founded a school which Heinrich Heine extravagantly calls "*Eine Passionsblume, die dem Blute Christi entsprossen ist.*"

Besides these great movements in philosophy and literature, there was the magnificent outburst of patriotism which united all Germans in a supreme effort to throw off the yoke of France and Napoleon. In this hour of deepest humiliation, unspeakable suffering and agonized effort the heart of Germany, realizing the vanity of all earthly things and the utter hopelessness of unaided human effort, turned, humble and contrite, to the God of its fathers for strength and succor. And the old faith, which still lived in the hearts of the common people, who had refused to give up their old *Predigt-and Erbauungs-buecher* for the silly, superficial

disquisitions of their Sebaldus Nothankers, rose up to have its say at the celebration of the three hundredth anniversary of the Reformation through the theses of sturdy old Claus Harms "Propst zu Kiel." Here is what they said: "With the idea of a progressive reformation, in the manner in which it is now understood, Lutheranism will be reformed back into heathenism" (No. 3). "In the sixteenth century the pardon of sins cost money after all; in the nineteenth it may be had without money, for people help themselves to it" (No. 21). The movement which was to give the Church such names as Hengstenberg, Rudelbach, Kliefoth, Harless, Delitzsch, Kurtz, Schmid, Bengel and Koestlin had set in.

But in 1829, at Leipzig, this was not yet noticeable. The supernatural rationalism of Professor and Superintendent Heinrich Gottlob Tzschirner, who died in 1828, the year before Ferdinand Walther entered, still held sway. Tzschirner, after some manner, believed in a supernatural revelation, but held to the supremacy of reason; occupying a position not unlike Locke's in the "Reasonableness of Christianity." But two men of the entire faculty, the Professors August Hahn and R. W. Lindner, Sen., taught the doctrine

of faith, and they did it, so Professor Guenther says, *"schwaechlich,"*—which, no doubt, means with becoming weakness and meekness.

No man can altogether escape the influences of his environment. No man can rise superior to it, taking and assimilating what it may have to offer for his development, unless the grace of God guides and directs his footsteps. Lacking such gracious guidance, Walther might have become a famous pulpit orator, like Francis Volkmar Reinhard, the principal court preacher at Dresden, or his successor, Christopher Friedrich von Ammon. Their sermons were unqualifiedly recommended to young theologians of the time as model discourses. To-day both of them are forgotten. They deserve to be, for to-day no Lutheran preacher would imitate Reinhard, who, preaching on the miraculous feeding of the multitude, makes the point that under ordinary circumstances, it would have been difficult to keep such a crowd in order without the help of the police, and then goes on to preach on "The silent power which virtue exerts by its presence." God had another and a different work for Walther to do, and He chose His own means to fit him for this work.

Chapter 3

Leadings of Providence

Not long before Walther entered the university a little group of students, prompted by the testimony of several believing laymen and led by an older candidate, named Kuehn, had formed a circle which met regularly for mutual edification through prayer, the reading of the Scriptures and the free discussion of the things which pertain to our salvation. Ferdinand Walther was introduced to this circle, in all probability by his brother, Otto Hermann, who was one of its members. Other members, who played their part in the founding and upbuilding of the Missouri Synod, were the pastors J. R. Buenger, Theodore Brohm and Ottomar Fuerbringer. Pastor E. G. W. Keyl had been called to the congregation at Niederfrohna-bei-Penig, in the valley of the Mulde, the same year Ferdinand Walther entered at Leipzig. Walther speaks of having visited him in the company of other students, in 1830, to hear him preach and attend a confirmation service at his church. The Candidate Kuehn, mentioned above as the leader of the group of

Leipzig students, became pastor of a church at Lunzenau, in the neighborhood. He died suddenly of scarlet fever, August 24, 1832, after a short period of blessed and fruitful service in the Master's vineyard. The simple people of his congregation were inclined to think that he had been poisoned by the enemies of the gospel. When Keyl heard of his death he shed tears, and said, "Oh, the mighty in Israel are fallen!" This Candidate Kuehn must have been a remarkable man, and his untimely death was sincerely mourned both by the faithful Christians of the Muldenthal and the student group at Leipzig, whose members looked up to him as a spiritual father.

Professor F. W. Lindner, following the example of August Hermann Francke, at Halle, for a time privately conducted a so-called *collegium philobiblicum* for these students, expounding the Scriptures and directing their efforts at practical sermonizing. He seems to have had little spiritual influence upon them, which is not surprising, when we remember that in 1831 he published a thick volume against the Lutheran doctrine of the Lord's Supper. Walther, who mentions this fact in his biography of the deceased Pastor Buenger, says of Professor

August Hahn, that while attacking rationalism he by no means taught pure Christian truth. The other professors, Tittmann, Theile, Illgen, Winzer and Goldhorn, were all "common rationalists," with the lone exception of Tittmann. Among the professors heard by Walther at Leipzig, was the celebrated George Benedict Winer, whose "Grammatik des Neu-testamentlichen Sprachidioms" is still indispensable to any man who would read the New Testament in the original. Fortunately, it has been translated into English. Doctor Walther pronounced his "Biblisches Realwoerterbuch" "a stupendously learned work" (*ein stupend gelehrtes werk"*). His acquaintance with Franz Delitzsch, made at this time, ripened into the intimacy of closest friendship. The two men regularly corresponded until the day of Walther's death.

None of the Leipzig professors paid any attention to these students after Professor Lindner gave up his *collegium philobiblicum*. They were left to themselves, and, since "being awakened out of sleep they walked honestly as in the day, striving to put on the Lord Jesus Christ," they were called upon to endure no little petty persecution at the hands of those of their fellow-

students who felt themselves more at home at a *Kommers* (sociable) than in a private religious gathering. Despised as contemptible hypocrites or pitied as unfortunate and misled religious enthusiasts, they were hated and cast out by the unbelieving world, which quite often meant separation from their next of kin. Walther speaks of there being but one home in Leipzig open to them, where they were understood and appreciated, and which they never visited without finding refreshment for body and soul; the home of Steuerrevisor Barthal and his noble Christian wife, who acted the part of a Frau Ursula Cotta to these young men. Other people called them Mystics, Pietists, Devotees, Obscurants, Bigots, and similar less flattering names, avoiding them as one would an infectious disease.

That they faithfully attended all required lectures, despite the attitude of their professors, need hardly be said. They could have absented themselves without inviting criticism, for at a German university one has only to enroll, pay the established fees and pass examinations. That they learned very much Biblical theology from them is open to question. Indeed, Pastor Keyl remarks in his diary that he made his first acquaintance

with Lutheran theology through his association with an elderly Leipzig shoemaker, named Goetsching. "My intercourse with this old experienced man," says Keyl, "was of great benefit to me during my university years. He had a good knowledge of Lutheran doctrine; had read much in Luther's writings and the Book of Concord; had fine comparisons, rejected the Herrnhuter, etc. I also learned to know a similar man in Frohna, namely, Father Schneider, of Oberfrohna, who greatly benefited me." When prophets fail to wait on prophecy God perfects His praise out of the mouths of babes in Christ.

The real spiritual leader of this group of young believers was Candidate Kuehn. Having come to full assurance of faith and the joy of believing only after a long period of spiritual struggle under the most agonizing conviction of sin and unspeakable terror of God's holy law, he attempted to lead the young men who sought his guidance in the same path he himself had gone; making his religious experiences the measure and test of every other man's. He overlooked that our Lord, who in the days of His flesh, as Mark tells us, took the poor deaf mute aside from the multitude, accommodating Him-

self to his needs, graciously deals with us as individuals; and that the religious experience of no two men will ever be in every particular exactly the same. He insisted upon trying to convince his young friends that their Christianity never rested upon a firm foundation, so long as they had not, like himself, experienced the keenest sorrow for sin and the very terrors of hell in agonizing struggles of repentance. The inevitable result followed. As Walther, speaking of Buenger, himself and others, tells us it was "a general change from an evangelical-joyful to a legalistic-gloomy Christianity."

The books of devotion most used by these young believers were the writings of Arndt, Francke, Bogatzky, Spener, Werner, Schade, Rambach, Steinmetz, Fresenius, and others of like character. It will be noticed that they are all of the pietistic school, the weakness of which consisted in its insistence upon a disregard of correct doctrinal statement in order to urge a religion of the emotions and practical benevolence. Extremely stated, their position was this: It matters not what you believe; all depends upon how you feel and what you do. We are very familiar with it in this country and it might be well to remember that it was the forerunner of the

common or "vulgar" rationalism described in the preceding chapter. But even the writings of these men were not read and accepted without reserve.

"The less a book invited to faith," says Walther, "and the more legalistically it insisted upon contrite brokenness of heart and upon foregoing complete mortification of the old man, the better a book we held it to be. Even such writings we usually read only so far as they described the griefs and exercises of repentance; when a description of faith and comfort for the penitent followed, we usually closed the book, for, so we thought, this is as yet nothing for us."

Under these circumstances it is not surprising that Walther found himself in deep spiritual distress and conflict of soul. Like the law and the gospel, contrition and faith may, and, indeed, must be sharply defined and separated, especially when it is a question of accurate dogmatic definition. But when it comes to Christian experience, any attempt to arbitrarily separate the two and fix the exact moment where contrition ceases to afflict and faith begins to comfort is a difficult and dangerous undertaking; especially when a man refuses to accept the comfort of the gospel because he imagines that

he has not yet attained to a sufficient degree of penitence. What Walther says of his friend Buenger, in the beautiful little biography he wrote after his death, no doubt applies to Walther himself: "He also not only gave himself, body and soul, to his Lord and Saviour, but he soon after also fell into dire distress of conscience, like several others of his student companions and fellows in faith. Like these he now tortured himself day and night to reach the highest possible degree of penitence and contrition, without, however, being able to attain that for which he strove." To which Walther remarks: "He who now, without first being driven into self-effort (*Eigenwirken*), is led to Christ without any byway, usually fails to realize how great a grace God thereby shows him."

These two young friends, Buenger and Walther, not only shared the same spiritual, but also similar bodily afflictions. Both contracted some affection of the chest or lungs, which, from all accounts, seems to have been incipient tuberculosis. At any rate, both seemed to have been marked for an early death. They would have been glad to die if only they might have been sure of their salvation. But at that time Romans 8 was

a sealed book to them.

Most of the men who belonged to their circle had completed their studies or left the university. Their leaving threw Walther, Buenger and Brohm together, and after Brohm, who lived with Buenger, also left, Walther and Buenger became inseparables —"*Leidensgenossen,*" Walther says, which we might translate "companions in misery of body and soul." "As distress of soul prevented convalescence of the body, so disease of the body prevented convalescence of the soul,"—thus runs Walther's description of their mutual state.

During this time Buenger and Walther especially enjoyed the Christian hospitality of the Barthel family. The head of the family, who gave up a government position to come to America for his faith's sake, was Treasurer of the Missouri Synod until his death in 1859. His noble Christian helpmeet outlived her husband many years, falling asleep in the Lord in 1881. Walther preached her funeral sermon and took occasion to publicly express his deep and abiding gratitude to her who had befriended him in his youth. "Fifty years have just elapsed," said Walther, and we can feel grateful affection quivering through every word,—"Fifty

years have just elapsed since I had the great good fortune to be introduced by a godly friend to the family of the deceased. A youth without God lay behind and since a short time being come to the knowledge of Jesus Christ a new, never anticipated world opened itself to me. I saw a truly Christian household, a family in which Jesus was all in all, in which the word of God was the daily meat and drink of souls, wielding the scepter in all things, in which the Lord was being served without ceasing, in which, therefore, Jesus' heavenly peace was poured out upon all members of the family. Thus I here found my spiritual parents, a father in Christ, a mother in Christ, who now cared for me spiritually and bodily as for a son.

"I just at that time was in deep spiritual affliction, was famished in body and soul, and wrestled, doubting my salvation, with despair. No praying, no pleading, no weeping, no fasting, no wrestling seemed able to help; the peace of God had departed from my soul. Terrified by the law, that verse resounded in my heart day and night:

> "'Nur dies, dies liegt mir an,
> Das ich nicht wissen kann,
> Ob ich ein wahrer Christ
> Und du mein Jesus bist.'

("This, only this is my care, that I cannot know if I am a true Christian and Thou art my Jesus.")

"It was then especially that the dear departed carried me in her motherly heart. Then, as often as I crossed her threshold, her lips not only ran over with words of evangelical consolation for me, but she wrestled day and night in fervent intercession with God for me, the strange youth. And, behold! God heard her supplication; I at last came unto peace in Christ; and now a bond of blessed fellowship in Christ embraced us which nothing could rend until her death.

"Oh, how I rejoice at an opportunity to publicly testify to this! But I rejoice far more that I may some day, before the throne of the Lamb and the face of all angels and the elect, give thanks with a perfect heart to her for all that she did for poor miserable me."

Was ever a finer testimonial to a mother and helper in Christ written or spoken by any man? Could any son be more deeply grateful to his own mother? And yet Walther owed his deliverance from spiritual anguish not to her, but to Pastor Martin Stephan, the leader of the Saxon emigrants

to America, whom he was compelled to expose as having been guilty of gross immorality shortly after the colony reached Perry County, Missouri. What this cost so grateful and affectionate a nature as Walther's can, perhaps, never be told.

Walther describes his appeal to Stephan and the help he received in a footnote to his biography of Buenger. His state may be best described by the familiar words, "tossed about with many a conflict, many a doubt; fightings and fears within, without." Now why, it may be asked, did he not go to some conscientious and experienced pastor? Why did he not act upon the advice of our Catechism: "Those, however, whose conscience is heavily burdened, or who are troubled and tempted, the confessor will know how to comfort and incite to faith with more passages of Scripture"? According to his own statement he did, but he failed to find what he sought. The "confessors," or pastors, it would seem, were unable to "comfort and incite to faith with passages of Scripture," which is another characteristic of rationalism and its miserable theology. Whom he sought he does not say. The student group had at first attended St. Peter's Church, where there was a believing pastor,

named F. A. Wolf. Afterwards they preferred to worship at the Orphans' and Penitentiary Church, where Pastor F. M. Haensel preached; who, while not such an elegant and clever pulpit orator as Wolf, delivered sermons with a fuller biblical content. Walther may have gone to either of these two men. If he did, they were unable to help him. What he tells us is this: Only after no one seemed able to advise and help him, and when the believing pastors to whom he appealed one and all urged him to look to Stephan, did he write him a letter, asking for the comfort of God's word, without, however, placing any special confidence in Stephan or cherishing much hope of finding what he sought. When he received Stephan's reply to his inquiry, he did not break the seal of the letter before kneeling in prayer and humbly asking God to graciously prevent his receiving false comfort, should any such be contained in the letter. But after reading it, he felt himself to be lifted up out of the depths of hell to the blessedness of heaven. His tears of penitent grief became tears of believing joy. Stephan showed him that he had long experienced the contrition he sought out of the law, that he lacked nothing but faith; nothing save this, that he, like the

man fallen among thieves, submit himself to the saving arms of the heavenly Good Samaritan. Walther, speaking of himself in the third person, says: "He could not resist; he had to come to Jesus. And now the peace of God entered into his heart. There he vividly experienced what private absolution means to a heart-affrighted sinner. While Stephan in his letter had not formally spoken absolution to him, he had personally applied the gospel to him, wherein the real essence of private absolution consists." In other words, private absolution is but the personal application of the gospel, a saying of "*Thy* sins be forgiven thee" to the individual, after God by the gospel has said it to the world, redeemed by the atoning death of His Son.

That Walther was inexpressibly grateful to Stephan appears from an incident also related by himself. About half a year later Konsistorialrath and Superintendent, Doctor Rudelbach, asked Walther to call on him at Glauchau, and informed him that he intended to propose him as tutor for his godly count. Doctor Rudelbach demanded that he break off all relations with Stephan. Walther told him at length what had led him to Stephan and what he owed him, ask-

ing, "Shall I forsake a man who, by God's grace, has saved my soul?" Deeply moved, Doctor Rudelbach replied, "No, my dear Walther, you must not forsake him; in God's name maintain your relations with him, but guard against all worship of man."

Having found healing for his soul, Walther also found healing for his body. Interrupting his studies during the winter of 1831-32, he spent half a year at home. Complete rest and fresh air, combined with loving care and the use of a simple home remedy, so far restored his health that he was able to return to Leipzig after the Easter vacation of 1832 to complete his theological studies, without, however, as he wrote Ottomar Fuerbringer, the slightest hope of ever being physically able to take up the work of the holy ministry. His friend Buenger again shared his experience. He, too, found peace of soul through Stephan, and a cure of his bodily illness through rest and treatment at the Radeburg baths near Dresden. Neither of them, Walther says, even remotely anticipated God's designs toward them, and that neither their bodily nor their spiritual illness was a sickness unto death but unto life, and the real preparation for the service in which God would some day use them in His

Church. "For he whom God would use in His kingdom, He first makes to be undone in order that he may be nothing but an empty instrument of God; and he and all Christians must say, "Not this poor impotent sinner, but God Himself has done this thing."

During the time he spent at home seeking his health, the works of Martin Luther, which were in his father's library (a rather unusual thing in those days) fell into Walther's hands. Lacking other occupation, he absorbed himself in their study. The inevitable result followed. From that time dates his living conviction of the sole scriptural character of the doctrine of the Lutheran Church and the necessity of its positive confession, which never again left him.

He had not previously recognized this truth. There was at first no discussion of doctrinal differences in the Leipzig student circle. As its members grew in grace and the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, they began to ask themselves, "What are we? Are we Lutherans? Or Reformed? Or United?" A division and separation followed, although the most of them soon realized that the faith which the Holy Spirit, through their prayerful searching of the Scriptures, had sealed in their hearts was

none other than the saving faith confessed by the Lutheran Church, which they had accepted before ever they knew by which Church this truth was fully held and proclaimed. After this profound study of Luther's writings in the Langenschursdorf parsonage (a study he continued all his life) Walther not only fully realized this, but he also realized another truth which he ever aimed to impress upon his students: "The nearer Luther, the better a theologian."

He completed his university studies in 1832, and came home to prepare for the September examinations. His period of trial and preparation was past; the period of sound and vigorous development about to begin. Had he not found salvation in Christ? Had he not found health of soul and body? Had he not in Luther found a trustworthy and inspiring guide? Had he not found in his own religious experience the truth of Luther's axiom, *"Oratio, meditatio et tentatio faciunt theologum"* ("Prayer, study and trial make a theologian")? Through the gracious leadings of Providence the worthy "Herr Studiosus" had become a worthy "Herr Kandidat."

Chapter 4

The Tutor

In those days a student of theology, before he could have any hope of being called to minister to a congregation was required to pass two examinations after the completion of his university work. The first was the *examen pro licentia concionandi* (the examination for the license or permission to preach); the other, to which no one was admitted before two years after passing his examination *pro licentia,* was the *examen pro candidatura,* or the examination for the taking of holy orders. The examination *pro licentia* was taken before a commission composed of a number of professors of the university theological faculty, and qualified the student who passed it to preach upon invitation in any congregation in the Kingdom of Saxony. The examination *pro candidatura* was taken before the consistory of the kingdom, and qualified the young man who passed it to stand as candidate for a call to any congregation of the Church of Saxony. The interval which necessarily elapsed between the examination *pro licentia*

and the examination *pro candidatura,* or the actual call to a congregation, was usually spent in tutoring in the homes of the nobility or the wealthier citizens. If the authorities of the Church had designedly planned to break the spirit of their candidates for the ministry no better scheme could have been devised, unless it were that so vividly described by Macaulay as having been in vogue in England toward the close of the seventeenth century, when every "coarse and ignorant country squire, who thought that it belonged to his dignity to have grace said every day at his table by an ecclesiastic in full canonicals, found means to reconcile dignity with economy" (Vol. I, p. 255). He usually succeeded by making his chaplain a sort of upper house servant, who was expected to marry a housemaid when he obtained a benefice. The condition of the clergy was never quite that bad in Germany. The German has too much respect for education and the *Beamtenstand* (every minister was a state official) to attempt to reduce his ministers to such a state of plebeian subservience.

Still, a system which made the candidate wait for years before he could really enter the service of the Church, and while waiting made him depend for his daily bread

upon the goodwill or whims of some man who might or might not be a Christian, and who merely aimed to obtain cheap and efficient home tutoring for his sons before sending them to the *Militaer-schule,* or gymnasium, was not calculated to develop or foster independence of character in the future leaders of the Church. Quite the reverse. At a period when the ministerial office was held in low esteem (as was the case under rationalism) and when the so-called *Patronats-system* gave certain men who belonged even to the lesser nobility the power of calling or appointing ministers to certain congregations situated on their estates, regardless of the wishes of their future parishioners, coupled with the further fact that "hope deferred maketh the heart sick," the position of the candidate was often a most trying one. If his patron was a Christian gentleman, the tutor was doubtless treated as a respected member of the family. If not, he might be treated as a menial, or, if he stooped to accommodate himself to the wishes and whims of his patron, as a retainer who, perhaps, ranked with the *Oekonom,* or farm manager. In any event, the position was an unenviable one for any man of real independence of character, and the tempta-

tion to escape from it by currying favor with the *Konsistorium*, or some *Kirchenpatron* was constantly present. True, a man of Walther's conscientious character and positive convictions could never stoop to anything of this kind, no matter how irksome his position as tutor or *Hauslehrer* might become. On the other hand, the desire to begin the real work of his life must have been very keen. Having believed, he "could not but speak the things which he had seen and heard" (Acts 4:20). And yet, while at home, preparing for the examination *pro Licentia Concionandi,* he writes a letter to his brother expressing doubt as to whether his conscience will permit him to enter the service of the State Church of Saxony. He says:

CHURSDORF, August —, 1833.

DEAR BROTHER:

Little time as I have, I must inform you of several matters in writing, since Wilhelm is returning.

The most important of them for me is that I received the notice to attend the examination last Thursday, namely, for the 13th and 14th of September, where I am to take the written; the oral is to take place on September 19th. It now lies with you if you care to be present (on the 19th), which would certainly please me very much; you will, of course, consider your own circumstances; I am not asking a sacrifice. Moreover, with the notice I also received the text for the sermon and the catechization. The text for the sermon is

Acts 26: 24-29. I am wavering between the two themes: "I. The preaching of the divine word before those who are not obedient to its operations. . . . II. The operations of the testimony of Jesus to those 'who refuse to be obedient to the power of the divine word.'" The text for the catechization is 2 Thess. 3: 10, 11, with the prescribed theme: "Faith in the divine support of human life does not relieve us of the duty of ourselves caring for our support." Now, good counsel is scarce; the working out refuses to go forward; assist me with your prayers. I depend upon it! . . .

Have you also read the motion of the minister, Doctor Miller, in the Landtags report, looking toward the appointment of a spiritual college (*collegium*) to formulate the dogma of the future Saxon Church, with instructions and advice to formulate it so "as to secure for it the largest acceptance on the part of the educated of the people"? God seems about to visit heavy judgments upon the Church of Saxony; in this fashion we may never be able, at least in Saxony (including Schoenburg), to enter the holy ministry. Who can permit himself to be pledged upon such symbols without hazarding his salvation?

In this letter he also speaks of Pastor Keyl's having been forbidden by the Chief Consistory (*Oberkonsistorium*) to preach the doctrine of original sin and his appeal to the higher courts, with the statement that he at his ordination had been pledged upon the Symbolical Books of the Lutheran Church at the very place where he was now being constrained to recant. This legal action and appeal cost poor Keyl no less than eighty thalers, which he was compelled to

pay out of his meager income.

No wonder Walther closed this letter: "Farewell, and reply soon to thy hard-pressed brother, F. W."

There is another, perhaps an additional explanation of that word "hard-pressed" (*bedraengt*). Conditions at home were not any too pleasant. His father, now that his son had completed his studies, perhaps felt with right that the time had come for Ferdinand to support himself, with which feeling he was doubtless in fullest accord. What was of far greater weight was the dissatisfaction Walther's father felt with the positive theological position taken by his two sons, Hermann and Ferdinand, together with his son-in-law, Pastor E. G. W. Keyl, of Niederfrohna. Their course seemed most unwise and inexpedient to Papa Walther, who, while not a rationalist, nevertheless, like so many others, accommodated himself without protest to his surroundings. While Ferdinand was preparing for his final examinations he strongly urged him not to speak out so openly against the rationalistic doctrines of the Leipzig professors, for he, otherwise, would surely be made to fail and be rejected as a candidate. Plainly the position of the two boys over against their father,

whom they dearly loved and highly respected, was not an easy one. One day, at one of these discussions, they said to him, "Judgment day will reveal it," namely, that the pure doctrine of the Lutheran Church is the saving truth. What invited the remark we are not told.

Under these circumstances it is not surprising that Ferdinand Walther in a letter dated January 15, 1834, should write to his friend Brohm: "My outward condition is not an enviable one. I therefore pray God to soon lead me to some other place; must, however, expect to find the same outward and inward foes everywhere."

When the position of tutor in the home of Herr Rath Friedemann Loeber, at Cahla, in Altenburg, was offered him (it would seem through the influence of Candidate Brohm) he made arrangements to accept it with serious misgivings as to his competency and a prayerful reliance upon the gracious help of God. As for his being competent, the following episode of his university days may serve as an illustration and proof: During December, 1830, he was privately instructing two boys in the S—— family at Leipzig. One day among the papers of Edward S. he by chance found the

lines, written in the boy's own hand: "I soon came away from Mr. K. to Mr. Walther, to whom I owe all my salvation. Before I came to him I neither knew myself to be a sinner nor anything of Christ and His grace; also nothing of the Bible. I owe all this to my present teacher; I, as a poor sinful mortal, can never repay him; God will reward him for having guided a soul to Him in heaven." Upon reading this Walther wrote in his diary: "God, great, gracious, merciful God, thanks be to Thee, that Thou hast not despised to suffer Thy Spirit to be effective in this child; for this laud, thanks, praise and honor to Thee in all eternity. O Lord Jesus, perform the work which Thou hast so gloriously begun; let nothing pluck him out of Thine hand. Help him unto Thine heavenly kingdom. Amen."

From which it would appear that the Loeber family, if it desired not only an education but a Christian training for its children, was to be complimented upon having secured the services of an unusually competent *Hauslehrer*. Herr Rath Friedemann Loeber was the oldest brother of the sainted Pastor G. H. Loeber, who came to America with the Saxon colony in 1839, and who was afterwards pastor of the congregation at

Altenburg, Perry County, Missouri. There was a younger brother, August Loeber, whose children were also taught by Walther, among them Richard Loeber, who became court preacher in Dresden, Saxony, where they have two court churches, one Lutheran, a relic of the old city, and the other Roman Catholic, for the present reigning house. When they open the sessions of their "Landtag," or Diet, they have services in both churches; the Lutheran representatives attending the one, the Roman Catholic court the other.

Walther came to the Loeber family at Easter time, 1834, and remained with them until the end of November, 1836. G. H. Loeber at the time was pastor of a church at Eichenberg, near Cahla, and Walther availed himself of the opportunity to cultivate an intimate friendship with a man who, though considerably older than himself, was among the first to appreciate and look up to Walther in the trying days which followed the exposure of Stephan. The eldest brother, with whom Walther lived while he was the tutor of the Loeber children, did everything in his power to make the young Candidate's position in his house agreeable and pleasant. Walther describes him as a man who was

in no way opposed to Christianity, but who, in his youth, had imbibed certain rationalistic ideas which made him question the divine inspiration and truth of many things contained in the Scriptures. He, for instance, held that certain stars or planets are inhabited, and that any statement in Genesis which conflicted with this idea was surely a private opinion of Moses, and not a part of divine revelation. The frequent discussions on this and similar topics, however, were never permitted to mar the feeling of mutual respect and esteem which existed between Walther and his "Herr Principal," as he calls him—a feeling which extended to all members of the Loeber family, and continued after Walther came to America. Instead of being a period of trial, the stay of Walther at the Loeber home seems to have been a time of rest and refreshment before the coming storm, which set in when the "Herr Kandidat" became "Herr Pastor" at Bräunsdorf, Saxony, Walther's first parish.

Chapter 5

Call and Ordination

Walther took the examination *pro candidatura* before the "High Oberkonsistorium" at Dresden, in the fall of 1836, two years after he left the university. He was twenty-five years old at the time. He does not say what mark the "High Oberkonsistorium," or "Exalted Board of Examiners," gave him, but we may safely assume that he here again shared experiences with his friend Buenger, whom, in April of the following year, after a most severe examination, they gave a mark of *"genuegend cum asterisco,"* or "slightly more than satisfactory." It stands to reason that the uncompromising Lutheranism of these young men was not calculated to impress a board of examiners whose every member was an outspoken rationalist. Accordingly, while the thoroughness of their preparation and equipment for the sacred office could not be denied or called into question by the "High Oberkonsistorium," its members could not refrain from expressing the hope which Herr Superintendent G. Chr. Grosse held with respect to Buenger, of

whom he said, in a testimonial dated January 20, 1837: "It may be hoped that he, as he enters more into business life (*das Geschaeftsleben*) will become milder as regards his system of dogmatics and thus a with blessing laboring servant of religion and the Church of Christ." According to the Herr Superintendent the holy ministry was a "business life" for the successful conducting of which a toning down of the dogmatic system of the Lutheran Confessions was absolutely necessary. Therefore, if Buenger received a *genuegend cum asterisco,* Walther was not likely to get much more from the "High Oberkonsistorium" at Dresden. Fortunately, God, whose strength is made perfect in weakness, is not guided in the selection of His chosen vessels by the opinions of such Church dignitaries as these Saxon examiners.

Soon after passing this examination, at the instance of Staatsminister Graf von Einsiedel, Walther was called to the congregation at Bräunsdorf, near Penig, Saxony, which was a part of the Herr Graf's *Patronat.* In other words, Graf von Einsiedel possessed the hereditary right to select a pastor for the people who lived on his estate. The well-known Dr. Buechsel, in his "Erin-

nerungen aus dem Leben eines Landgeistlichen" ("Recollections Out of the Life of a Country Parson"), originally published in the *Evangelische Kirchenzeitung,* has a chapter on "Die Patrone." He describes several, among them one who in his youth had lived at court and was filled with Voltaire's ideas and views of life, attended church services two or three times a year, bringing a newspaper with him for his entertainment, who openly declared that he came merely to set an example to the common people, and pitied the minister who by his position or station in life was condemned to preach things which no sensible person any longer believed. "The influence of such gentlemen upon the congregation is very small," says Buechsel, "and not at all to be feared." Here is his astonishing explanation: "Thirty or forty years ago poor and uneducated people held it to be a matter of course that superior, wealthy and educated people lived without prayer, the word of God and the Church. Concern that this godless example does such great harm is not altogether well founded." Buechsel wrote this in 1861. The period he had in mind was, therefore, the time of Walther's ordination. His remark gives us another charac-

teristic of rationalism as well as some idea of the possibilities for mischief of this "Patronats-system."

Fortunately, Minister Graf von Einsiedel was of a different calibre than the patron described by Dr. Buechsel. He is said to have been a sincere, upright, believing Christian. He doubtless had his reasons for calling Walther to the Bräunsdorf pastorate. The Christian character of the man and Walther's relation to him appears from a letter written to the Herr Graf by Walther, describing his coming to Bräunsdorf, his ordination and first sermon, conditions in the congregation, his efforts looking toward their improvement, etc., in which he pours out his whole heart to his patron as to a dear and intimate friend.

He informs him that he had consented, although with some reluctance, in deference to the wishes of the people, to come to Bräunsdorf on January 10, five days before the day set for his ordination, and that more than a hundred of them came to meet him at Chursdorf, where he happened to be staying at the time. An even larger company, together with the schoolmaster and his pupils, met him at the entrance to Bräunsdorf, to receive him in their midst. At the parson-

age the schoolmaster greeted and welcomed him with a well-meant (*wohlgemeinten*) address, to which Walther replied, expressing his thanks, his wishes and his desires.

That word "well meant" is significant. Had Walther already noticed or felt that this unbelieving village schoolmaster was to become his most bitter enemy, causing him no end of care and trouble? It is said that Walther was no judge of men. That significant *wohlgemeint* would warrant the questioning of this statement. By the way, Keyl also had cause to complain most bitterly of his schoolmaster in Niederfrohna, who slandered his pastor, wrote pasquilles against him and overlooked no opportunity to denounce him to the rationalistic church authorities. Koestering, in his biography of Keyl, calls this man "A very special instrument of the devil" (*ein ganz besonderes Werkzeug des Teufels*), which, to say the least, is a somewhat vigorous characterization. It would seem that these schoolmasters, feeling themselves to be undeservedly subordinated to their pastors as regards dignity and emolument, held it to be their supreme duty and chief purpose in life to assert their importance by opposing and annoying them in every imaginable way. There is some reason

to believe that their example here and there still finds imitation, even in this country.

But this is a digression. We were describing Walther's letter to his Herr Patron. In it he speaks of the anxiety which filled his heart as he looked forward to his ordination for fear that he might be compelled to witness changes on the part of the "Ephorus" (overseers, church authorities) calculated to deprive him of that comfort given by the assurance of not only having been lawfully called but also ordained and sent.

"Ephorus" primarily means "Herr Superintendent," who was entrusted with the duty of ordering and arranging for his ordination. Guenther, without giving his name, describes him as "the godless, rationalistic superintendent who caused him (Walther) endless heart-breaking grief." Koestering calls him "*ein ebenso boshafter Feind*" ("just as malicious a foe") as Keyl's schoolmaster, implying that he, too, was "a very special instrument of the devil."

This seems a very severe judgment, until we remember what Walther tells us of his experience with this man in his biography of Buenger. In a sermon preached before "His Eminence," Walther had testified that death entered the world by the fall of our

first parents, a truth which the Herr Superintendent promptly censured as an outworn fable. When Walther reminded him that he himself, just a year before, had by oath pledged him on the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, which contained this doctrine, "His Eminence" replied, "You were not pledged upon the letter, but upon the spirit of the Confessions." Walther told him that he had no recollection of any such statement in the form of pledge or subscription; moreover, it was clearly and plainly written in the Scriptures: "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die," to which the Herr Superintendent replied, "O pshaw! that means spiritual death." Walther promptly rejoined, "But does not God immediately after the fall say to Adam, 'Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return'?" Whereupon His Eminence cast down his eyes, said no more and dismissed Walther. It is needless to say that he did not forget him. Men, especially unbelieving men, in high places, remember these things, as Walther, Keyl, Buenger and others found to their cost. From which it appears that Koestering's emphatic characterization was not unjustified by fact, and from which it also appears that Walther's anxiety on the eve of

his ordination was not without some foundation.

Fortunately, as is shown by the letter to his patron, all went far better than he had dared to hope. After confession, absolution and reception of the holy communion, which to Walther's joy the Herr Superintendent administered without change, according to the teachings and use of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, Walther was ordained according to the practice of our and the apostolic Church, "so that by the same not only the proper obligation was laid upon me, but there was also given unto me in the name of the Triune God, as valid before God, the power and the authority to preach the gospel, to wield the power of the keys and to administer the Holy Sacraments according to the institution of Jesus Christ."

Plainly, Walther had read and thoroughly understood the XIV. Article of the Augsburg Confession, which says "that no one should teach or preach publicly in the church, or administer the sacraments without a regular call." His ordination, the testimony of the Church that he was lawfully and properly called, therefore meant the same thing to him that our Luther's having been made a Doctor of the Holy Scriptures meant to

Luther. It was Luther's stay in every hour of trial and doubt. He again and again insists, over against the opposition of Rome, that "he had been sworn and pledged to faithfully and purely preach and teach his beloved Holy Scriptures."

Another joy for Walther was the presence at his ordination, besides the pastor of Kaufungen and another minister friend of the neighborhood, of his aged father, his elder brother and his brother-in-law, Pastor Keyl, who all, he says, "with laying upon of hands out of full hearts, spoke the words of consecration over me."

Then he goes on to describe his inaugural sermon to his patron, prefacing his account with the words, "Richly strengthened by what had gone before" ("*Reichlich gestaerkt durch das Vorausgegangene*). He preached on Jeremiah 1 : 6-8 : "Then said I, Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child. But the Lord said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatever I command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces; for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord." In his introduction he spoke of being weighed down and oppressed by the consideration of the heavy responsi-

bility of the sacred office which he had just assumed and the account which would one day be required of him together with a realization of his own helplessness and incompetence. Still, in order that his congregation at the very beginning of his ministry in its midst might look into his heart he desired to speak of the theme: "What makes a Christian minister joyful and confident at the entrance upon his office? There are three things," he said. "1. He does not come of his own election but according to the call of God, for God comforts Jeremiah with this truth when He tells him, 'Thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee.' 2. He does not come with his own wisdom, but with the word of God, for God also comforts the prophet with this truth, when He says, 'Whatsoever I command thee, thou shalt speak'; finally, 3. He does not come with his own power, but with divine aid, for God finally sustains His prophet among many nations with the promise, 'Be not afraid of their faces, for I am with thee to deliver thee.'" He closed his sermon with a prayer in which he did not fail to invoke God's rich blessing upon his patron. This brief sketch of his inaugural sermon before the Bräunsdorf congregation, with its lucid ar-

rangement, precision of statement and warmth of feeling, gives indication of the powers which, ripened into maturity, were to make Dr. A. Broemel begin his study of the great preachers of the Christian Church with the golden-tongued Chrysostom and end it with Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther.

The letter to his patron goes on to describe the occurrences of the following day, when he took his oath of office and was legally confirmed as pastor of Bräunsdorf at the residence of the superintendent at Penig. He remarks: "Praise be to God in eternity that I, by His grace and mercy, am not compelled to look upon this oath as being a shackle of conscience (*Gewissensfessel*), but rather that through the same the strengthening conviction has been quickened in me that I now have liberty to teach (*Lehrfreiheit*), namely, freedom to teach the pure word of God, to which my poor heart clings as to the firm anchor of my hope for the present and the world to come. Yea, I may look upon a from time to time repeated communication on this matter to Your Excellency as being a duty."

Why did Walther wish to report on his preaching and teaching to his patron? Did he mistrust His Eminence, the Herr Superin-

tendent? It would seem so. In his account of his ordination he told Graf von Einsiedel that while refraining from making any change in the ordination form, the Herr Superintendent had "accompanied the act with an unchristian address." He had the tyrannical persecution of his brother-in-law, Pastor Keyl, whom the authorities were trying to deprive of his liberty to teach by imposing fines in the form of court costs, before his eyes. He fears for his own *Lehrfreiheit.* The outcome showed that his apprehensions were well-founded. Walther's letter then goes on to describe conditions in the congregation. He tells his patron of his conviction that real spiritual life was in all probability not to be found in any member of the congregation. How could it be awakened, when the living word of God had not been preached there for forty or more years? An outward respect for God's word and the minister is the rule; true, only in so far as this may be compatible with complete carnal security. The prevailing sins are lewdness, Sabbath-breaking, drunkenness, shamelessness and rudeness; ignorance of God's word is boundless; besides the congregation also stands exceedingly low in secular knowledge; very few of the adults

are able to correctly write their own names."

By the way, another characteristic of "vulgar" rationalism. A contempt of God's word inevitably breeds ignorance and immorality.

As for the school, Walther says, with all fairness to the teacher, that it without question is above many others; order, diligence and obedience prevail; among the young people of the congregation those may readily be distinguished who have profited by N's (the schoolmaster's) instructions; as a rule they are better taught and less rude than the others. Instruction in religion is moralizing (*moralisirend*); a curious mixture of truth and falsehood.

Surely this letter is a remarkable document to have been written shortly after his ordination by a young man of only twenty-five years. For keenness of insight, ripeness of judgment, caution of statement, and, above all things, firmness of conviction, it might have been written by a man of twenty-five years' experience in the ministry.

Now, what did Walther propose to do? Give up in despair and go back to his first love, the study of music? Start a country life movement in his congregation and attract the people by interesting himself in the

promotion of their material welfare? Let him tell us. He says in this same letter: "It has, therefore, been my chief aim and effort to present the foundation truths of the divine word so plainly, so simply, so thoroughly, and so insistently as by God's grace was possible for me, and in this way to bring my hearers to a live perception of their own blindness, helplessness and corruptness, and at the same time of the boundless richness of grace in Jesus Christ and to a real insight into the true essence of saving faith and a sincere Christian life. I have constantly endeavored to awaken in them a desire and love of searching God's word for themselves and to remove, so far as possible, their many prejudices against the Holy Scriptures and pure doctrine, and especially against sincere godliness. Attention to the here not uncommon reliance upon honesty before the world and a pharisaic righteousness, and upon the mere outward use of the holy sacraments seemed especially necessary. Besides the sermons, of which I preach two on all communion and festival days, the introduction of the church examination on the catechism with the unmarried (*mit den Ledigen*) held regularly every two weeks seems to me to be especially helpful; I here find

opportunity to speak on many matters which in a sermon may either not at all, or at least not be presented in a manner so well adapted and fruitful as regards the insight of the people. The visiting of the sick accordingly makes up a chief part of the cure of souls."

Plainly the "Herr Kandidat" had become a "Herr Pastor," a real shepherd of souls. And we might as well make up our minds that the great arch-enemy of God and man will soon find some "especial instrument" (some *ganz besonderes Werkzeug*) to hinder his work, worry the shepherd and try to scatter and destroy the flock committed to his charge. This will be the easier because of prevailing religious conditions not only in Bräunsdorf village, but in Saxony, and, for that matter, in all Germany.

Chapter 6

General Religious Conditions

Although a fair idea of the prevailing religious conditions in Saxony at the time of Walther's brief pastorate may be formed by what has been said above, a somewhat more specific description would seem to be necessary to explain his connection with Martin Stephan, his resignation in 1838, and his leaving his home and mother country to come to America the same year. Fortunately, Walther himself supplies this in his biography of Pastor Buenger. Written in 1882, after nearly fifty years had elapsed, in other words, after time had given a proper historical perspective, it can hardly be said that his description is biased or unduly severe. If anything, it is unduly charitable and lenient, for, as Guenther says, "The religious oppression under which faithful Lutherans in Saxony lay were most dreadful" (*ganz entsetzlich*). Walther writes: "Just as in that time the binding by oath upon the Book of Concord was only one empty comedy, so the most important regulations of the established Church were just so many

actual and well-known denials of the sworn Confession of the Church, which plainly proved that only upon the basis of Jesuitical moral principles it might be urged that the established Church of Saxony was still a Lutheran, thus a faithful Church, because the Confession still stood with right in the same. In the first place, already since 1812, a Church-book, or so-called "Agende," had been introduced which a Lutheran-believing minister might use only with bad conscience, insomuch as it contained forms which on the one hand openly denied divine truth, and on the other miserably watered Christian doctrine. To this came another thing: While nobody asked or cared if the rationalistic, unbelieving ministers, to whom it still sounded too Christian, guided themselves by the "Agende," a Lutheran-believing minister did not dare in any wise to depart from it. If he did this and it came to the ears of his superiors, he was most severely called to account. When, among other things, the writer (Walther) had used the old form of absolution not contained in the "Agende," and his unbelieving schoolmaster for this reason accused him before his superintendent, he reported the matter to the Consistory of the country, which hereupon strictly forbade him

the use of the old form of absolution, and again pledged him, according to the "Agende," in all cases where absolution was spoken, to merely announce the forgiveness of sins, condemning him to bear all accumulated costs of the written negotiations. Moreover, a believing pastor came into even greater distress of conscience when he was expected to read from his pulpit and present to God the miserable prayers especially prepared by the *Consistorium* for special occasions. Furthermore, a beyond all measure miserable rationalistic hymnal was introduced. The school books in use were almost without exception completely leavened with the leaven of rationalism, so that a believing minister, as the so-called Spiritual Inspector (of the school) constantly lay under dire distress of conscience. Wherever school books that were in some measure pure had maintained themselves, there rationalistic superintendents labored with might and main to abolish and replace them with rationalistic substitutes. When the writer (Walther) attempted to secure the introduction of a school book written in a Christian spirit, his godless schoolmaster immediately denounced him to his superintendent, who, thereupon, joined hands with the ignorant village school-

board and together with it attempted to compel the prompt introduction of a just as miserable as anti-Christian so-called "Schoolfriend." However, by God's gracious providence, the attempt failed of success because the writer (Walther) appealed to his pious Church patron, Staatsminister Graf Detlev von Einsiedel, who not only, in order to win the congregation, made it a present of a large number of copies of a good school reader, but also appealed in this matter to the district directorate, which as highest instance had its final decision. True, the writer (Walther) was compelled to bear the by no means moderate costs of this legal action (which he was of course glad to do); yet, on the very day before his emigration, without having been requested, the congregation refunded the amount to him with the statement that the action had been conducted only for the sake of the welfare of its children.

Furthermore, it was in the highest degree oppressive to the consciences of Lutheran-believing pastors of the established Saxon Church that they, in direct opposition to the word of God, were not only compelled, by reason of their office in the established Church, to maintain ecclesiastical, sacra-

mental and fraternal relations with errorists, yea, with most notorious heretics, but even to recognize them as their spiritual superiors (*Oberhirten*); suffer themselves to be examined, ordained, pledged on the Confessions and installed into office by them; yes, compelled to permit them in their presence, before the minister's own congregation, to blaspheme divine truth and before them to spew out their doctrine of devils. When the writer (Walther) had preached his trial sermon and shortly thereafter was ordained in the presence of his congregation, the officiating superintendent, in his address to him, slandered Elijah and David as common murderers, while warning him against a Christianity which despised the pleasures of this life and blasphemously invited him to preach as joyous a Christianity as Christ had preached with very deed at the marriage feast of Cana. Finally, it is self-understood that this also caused a Lutheran-believing minister no little distress of conscience, that the practice of announcement before communion, the suspension of impenitent men from the Lord's Supper, in short, every exercise of Church discipline was prohibited to him.

Lutheran-believing laymen in Saxony at

that time also suffered a no smaller distress of conscience. They were required to recognize notorious false prophets as their shepherds and pastors (*Seelsorger*), permit their children to be baptized and confirmed by them, suffer themselves to be absolved by them at confession and to receive the holy communion at their hands. They were required to place their children in the charge of godless schoolmasters for their instruction in religion and their Christian training, and for this purpose to purchase and themselves place into their hands godless school-books.

Whenever a child was born to believing parents there was great distress. Of the five forms for baptism contained in the Church-book ("Agende") but one was in some measure endurable. The father was, therefore, compelled to hasten to his unbelieving pastor and humbly beg him to use this one form; and even this request was but seldom granted to him, so that, as a rule, he with deeply wounded conscience carried his child home from church after it, by an enemy of Christ, had indeed been baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, but with the addition of his own rationalistic "twaddle" (*Gewäsch*). To which Walther adds in a footnote: "More-

over at that time there were also ministers in Saxony who did not even baptize according to the words (of institution) in the name of the Trinity. Still we know of no case where they dared do this with the children of those parents whom they knew to be believers."

In this connection Walther quotes the experience of a friend with a certain Pastor S., who, after having promised to use the one acceptable form of baptism, arbitrarily changed it at the font itself, substituting a prayer of his own fabrication for the Lord's Prayer, omitting the renunciation, reciting the Creed, but not in question form, etc. The outraged people insisted that he keep his promise and read the form without change, which he, after a disagreeable argument, finally did, introducing his administration of the sacred act with the words: "These people have presumed to lay down prescriptions to a teacher of religion; I submit to them because I consider their weakness." He did not consider that it was his duty to faithfully abide by the forms for sacred acts approved and sanctioned by the Church. This, by the way, is another characteristic of rationalism. A dyed-in-the-wool rationalist is never satisfied to use an accepted Church form for a ministerial act. With the most astounding self-

sufficiency he is ever ready to cast it aside, and, upon the spur of the moment to substitute his own poetic twaddle (Oh, for a word like "*Gewäsch*"!) for words and prayers hallowed by centuries of use. He does this with the liturgy, with the baptismal, confirmation and marriage service; in short, upon every possible or impossible occasion. And he expects people to consider this "nice."

But this is another digression. Let us return to Walther. Commenting on the above described incident, he says: "Thus a rationalistic minister conducted himself toward a candidate whose generally known learning he was compelled to respect. But if the man requesting the administration of baptism in a churchly manner was of a lower station, for instance a poor linen weaver or stocking knitter, then very different scenes were enacted at the baptismal font, if he in any way dared to give voice to his misgivings. In the first place, he practically never received the promise from his minister that he would baptize his child in a Lutheran churchly manner, and if he hereupon ventured to express any dissatisfaction with the manner in which the baptism had been performed, he had cause to be glad if he was merely dismissed with words of abuse instead of being accused and

punished as an audacious desecrator of the Church."

"Hard as it was for many poor Lutheran-believing laymen to walk for miles and miles if they for once desired to hear a Lutheran sermon, this was the smallest thing they had to bear. Many of them, after having labored the whole week from early dawn until late at night in the sweat of their face to earn their meager daily bread for their own households, set out at the approach of Sunday soon after midnight in order to refresh their famishing hearts with the preaching of the pure, alone-saving word of God in some distant church. When this was done, they at once, on Sunday evening, set out for the return with rejoicing, and on Monday, refreshed in soul, again took up the weekly task which so meagerly supported them and their own. How gladly the Lutheran-believing ministers and laymen of those days would have given up everything if only they might have secured permission to unite in a Lutheran Free Church, separated from the deeply corrupted and fallen established Church! But there was at that time absolutely no thought of their receiving permission for such a purpose. Emigration to a country where religious liberty prevailed was, therefore, recognized as the

only way of escape from the oppression of conscience, constantly growing more and more unbearable, which threatened to suffocate in them all life of faith. To this came the warning example which the Lutherans of Saxony saw in the fate of the separated Lutherans of Prussia. For when many of them, after unsuccessful, faithful and hot battle against union (the Prussian Union of Frederick William III, 1817, 1830) and the enduring of heavy persecutions, sought permission to emigrate, this prayer was flatly denied them at the instance of Kultus Minister von Altenstein, although a Prussian law of the year 1818 explicitly permitted emigration. The Lutherans of Saxony, not without reason, feared that the same fate threatened them. . . . Although in the established Church of Saxony the union of Lutherans and Reformed was not yet, as in Prussia, formally introduced by a special law, it was none the less long since actually united. To mention but one thing, such widely differing forms for official acts had been received by the Church of Saxony just for this reason, that unbelieving ministers, just as well as the believing, might officiate therein, and that unbelieving laymen, just as well as the believing, might find satisfaction therein; with this

exception, that far more regard was had for the former than for the latter. In short, the union of the Saxon established Church was, it is true, no union of Reformed and Lutherans, but a union of unbelievers and believers."

Such were religious conditions in Germany, in Saxony and in the village of Bräunsdorf at the time of Walther's pastorate. The "distress of conscience" he so often speaks of was tasted by him in the fullest measure. The rationalistic Book of Forms ("Agende"), the rationalistic hymnal and the rationalistic school books were enough in themselves to burden any Lutheran-believing conscience without further prodding. But the "Herr Superintendent" and the "Herr Dorf-schulmeister," these two "special instruments," saw to it that there was no lack of further annoyance and persecution. Walther was accused before the Church authorities again and again, overwhelmed with official censures and rebukes, compelled in pure self-defence to bear the costs of expensive legal actions, and generally treated like some spiritual leper. He speaks of these things in his letters to his friends. But there is no thought of unfaithfulness to conviction in his heart; no chafing and no complaining.

He says in a letter to Brohm, August 17, 1837: "Fear of man does not move me in the least, but only the fear of unwise or illegal steps. If God's honor requires it, I am joyfully ready to invite the attack of Superintendent, Kreisdirection (District School-board), Consistorium and Ministerium. If it were God's will, I would only rejoice if the burden of my office were taken from me, for it is very, very heavy; but I am also willing to bear it as long as I can do so in God's name and with the assurance that He is with me."

"It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth," says Jeremiah. Then he goes on to explain why: "He sitteth alone and keepeth silence because he hath borne it upon him." It is especially good for a pastor to bear the yoke in his youth. It teaches him to sit alone and keep silence, which is one of the hard, hard things about the ministry. For a minister must not chafe and complain. He may seek advice and counsel of a friend, but he must not talk of his own troubles. This is a hard lesson to learn. Fortunate the pastor who, like Walther, learns it in his youth. For when he wrote this letter to Brohm he was not yet twenty-six years old and he had been at Bräunsdorf

about seven months. The young "Herr Pastor" was rapidly being enriched and ripened through Christian experience.

Chapter 7

Martin Stephan

"Emigration to a country where religious liberty prevailed was therefore recognized as the only way of escape from the oppression of conscience, constantly growing more and more unbearable, which threatened to suffocate in them all life of faith,"—thus Walther summarizes his description of the situation of the faithful Lutherans in Saxony. There could be no emigration without leadership. That leadership had to have some pressing reason for leaving Germany as well as a genius for organization, which could not only inspire blind confidence, but actually command the purses of people of means. The one man who possessed these qualifications was Martin Stephan, pastor of the Bohemian St. John's Congregation, in Pirna, a suburb of Dresden. Doctor C. E. Vehse, a Doctor of Laws, who came to America with him and returned to Germany after Stephan's exposure, wrote a book on the Saxon emigration. He says: "Stephan is a psychological riddle." This does not help us very much, for every man is more or less

of a psychological riddle. Then he adds: "Whatever may be said against it, this much stands: As godless a man as he was, just so shrewd a man was he." This is better. A shrewd, godless man used by God, again "moving in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform," and, like King Saul of Israel, cast aside by the divine judgment just as soon as he, having fulfilled the divine purpose, refused to repent of his sins. The tragic fate of such men always arouses the profoundest pity in the hearts of the Davids raised up by God to supplant them. This was Walther's feeling toward Stephan. He never forgot his own indebtedness to him and the immense service he had rendered to the faithful Lutheran Church. We shall fare best if we let him tell us what manner of a man Stephan was. Fortunately, he does this in his biography of Buenger. So let us quote again: "Martin Stephan was born August 13, 1777, at Stramberg, in Moravia, of poor but pious parents. He was already a journeyman linen weaver when he, in 1803, with the support of pious Christians at Breslau, entered the gymnasium of that city. He afterwards frequented the Universities of Halle and of Leipzig. In the year 1809 he first became pastor of a small Lutheran congregation at

Haber, in Bohemia, but after the lapse of a year (1810), followed a call to the Bohemian congregation at Dresden. The less God's word at that time resounded in the other churches of Dresden the quicker Stephan's church was filled with the souls of that place which were eager for salvation; for Stephan really preached the gospel, and that upon the foundation of his own personal experience. Like a house of bread, in which every beggar during a period of most bitter famine might come and take fresh nourishing bread, Stephan's church in that day stood, the smallest and plainest of the splendid city. Stephan possessed none of the arts of worldly oratory; at least the richly endowed man did not employ them. Hardly moving a hand, seldom modulating his voice, without any force of expression, he plainly and simply declared the counsel of God for man's salvation, showing in the same manner the spirituality and strictness of the law and the condition of every man by nature, as well as the riches of grace of the gospel and the sure help which every sinner may find in Christ. Whosoever heard him once, if he was not filled with the spirit of scoffing, felt himself moved to the inmost depths of his being, without really knowing how this had

come to pass. Little as his sermons were what is usually called 'attractive,' they nevertheless had such power of attraction that many people, determined never again to enter his church lest they become more disquieted, yet after a short time were drawn back again with irresistible force. In his sermons Stephan aimed to influence not so much the emotions as conscience. In this his wonderful knowledge of men and of the human heart was of great service to him. It could never be said of Stephan that he ever designed to arouse enthusiastic (*schwaermerisch*) emotions. Whoever persuaded himself to go to him seeking advice and comfort found the most cordial reception, and, as a rule, the most reliable advice and a true comfort actually drawn from the word of God and a rich Christian experience. This was a fact so well-known and recognized even by Stephan's opponents among the believing pastors of the country, that they themselves in the end often sent the most helpless (*rathlosesten*) and heavy-burdened souls who came to them to Stephan as the one man who, if possible for any, would help them aright. Stephan's cure of souls (*Seelsorge*) thus little by little extended itself far beyond Dresden. Of course,

the unbelieving world after a time directed its attention to him. At first looked upon as some ruin which had stood from days of old, deserving no serious attention, he, for all that, because of his visibly increasing influence, not only with simple and uneducated people, but also in like manner with highly educated and in part highly stationed persons, finally appeared to the world as a dangerous man whose doings must be stopped. Just as his predecessor, the excellent minister, George Petermann, and Czapowitz had conducted private meetings in the parsonage, so Stephan held similar meetings. Opening and closing these gatherings with song and prayer, he reviewed in catechetical form the sermon preached on the preceding Sunday with practical applications bearing upon Christian life, such as he could not well have made from the pulpit. It was, above all, these private meetings to which more and more salvation-seeking souls streamed, which first provoked public opposition against Stephan on the part of the world. Accordingly he was first severely attacked, in 1821, in political papers as the founder of a new fanatical sect. Stephan did not quietly accept this, but he promptly replied in the *Nationalzeitung der Deutschen,* as follows:

"I am neither the founder of a sect, nor the leader of a sect; I neither belong to an old nor to a new sect; I hate all sectarianism and fanaticism; I am an Evangelical Lutheran minister, and preach the word of God as it is written in the Bible. I build my congregation upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone. I have and preach the apostolic religion, so purely and courageously preached by Luther. I preach the law and the gospel, the knowledge of sins and the knowledge of grace in Christ—God made man—I preach faith in Christ, and by His death on the cross completed atonement for the sin of the whole world. I preach this plainly, not in any strange, mystic sense, but in the sense which our pious forefathers honestly and plainly expressed it in the symbolical writings. I have no peculiar religious opinion; my religion stands neither above the Bible nor below the Bible, but in the Bible; it leads to Christ and keeps with Him," etc.

We can readily see why Walther quotes this in full. It is Stephan's confession of faith, and, incidentally, the confession of faith of Stephan's adherents. Surely, Walther owed it to the man whom God used

for the leading of the Saxon emigrants to America even as he owed it to these emigrants themselves to publicly make this statement. It was not a question of defending them against the charge of sectarianism and schism, or the worse insinuation, actually made, of having silently tolerated, or, perhaps, even shared his immorality. It was rather a question of showing by Stephan's own words the Lutheran standing of the people who, perhaps all too faithfully, adhered to him when they knew of no one else to whom they might adhere, and, above all, the real secret of his power which was the faithful preaching of the word of God "in the sense which our pious forefathers honestly and plainly laid it down in our confessional writings."

Walther, therefore, refers to two sermons published by Stephan in 1823, with an introduction in which he insists that he taught no other doctrine in his private meetings than that proclaimed from his pulpit. Walther also quotes at length from the preface of a volume of sermons published by Stephan in 1825, where Stephan says: "What I have preached I myself believe with my whole heart. I am firmly convinced that only the Bible can be a fountain of pure Chris-

tian doctrine. Out of this our pious forefathers have drawn and preserved the pure doctrine in the confessional writings of our Evangelical Lutheran Church for us. The spreading of this pure doctrine is my sincere effort in this book."

Finally he points to a "Confession of Faith of St. John's Congregation, Dresden," published in 1833, as "a refutation of the charges brought against it and its pastor in several public papers," with this comment: "A booklet of seventy-four pages, in which Stephan's congregation, as late as the year 1833, makes the same simple conservative Lutheran confession; by appealing, and that by name, to all recognized faithful teachers of our Church from Luther down to the most recent times."

Koestering, the Herodotus of the Missouri Synod, in his "Auswanderung der Saechsichen Lutheraner" and in his "Biography of Pastor E. G. L. Keyl," devotes considerable space to an attempt to prove that "Stephan's doctrine had, perhaps, never been the pure doctrine of Luther, but rather a more pietistic one." He discusses his doctrinal system ("if one with him can speak of any system at all"); accuses him of doctrinal errors, hierarchical principles and tendencies, a miscon-

ception and abuse of the power of the keys, a false conception of the holy ministry and its powers, etc. Still he admits that it was impossible to prove him guilty of even one striking error. We ask: Then why make the attempt? Far better to simply take the generous position of Walther and admit him to have been a man who courageously held and proclaimed Lutheran truth in a day when the holding and preaching of that truth brought only contempt and persecution as its reward. The invitation to solve Doctor Vehse's "psychological riddle" is strong. But it cannot be solved by dissecting Stephan's doctrinal system. Nor can it be solved by discussing his family relations and home life, his promenades on summer evenings with the members of his congregation, his having been arrested by the Dresden police only to be discharged with no proof of guilt against him, his failure to avoid every appearance of evil, his intolerance of criticism or contradiction, the blind, almost idolatrous adherence of his followers, the holding aloof from him of many upright and right-thinking people, his having been suspended from his office when his congregation charged him with neglect of duty, his having left Dresden at night to take ship at Bremen without say-

ing farewell to his wife and children, his having been tortured at his death with horrible visions, etc. Hochstetter, in his "Geschichte der Missouri Synode," follows Koestering in this. He comes no nearer solving the "psychological riddle" than Vehse or Koestering. Why not simply say it will never be solved until all things are fully revealed by Him who looketh not, like poor blind men, upon the outward appearance, but who looketh upon the heart? We may, perhaps, go a step further, and say this: Stephan, it would seem, did not fall under the stress of a sudden temptation. A sin, such as his, is seldom the growth of a day. But what had passed in the soul of this man, who unto thousands had been a prophet of righteousness, it is impossible to say. That he was not utterly reprobate might, perhaps, be inferred from the fact that no similar charge was ever again brought against him, and that a young woman of the best families of Saxon emigrants followed him after his expulsion from the colony and clung to him until he died in 1847, pastor of a small congregation near Red Bud, or Horse Prairie, Illinois. Vehse, the jurist, technically correct, calls her "his concubine." Hochstetter, again following Koestering, calls her *eine aus seiner weib-*

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lichen Dienerschaft, "one of his female servants." Neither expression is exactly charitable. Walther says nothing. In his biography of Buenger he discusses these matters only in so far as such discussion is necessary to explain Buenger's relation to Stephan. We shall fare best if we follow his example, prayerfully remembering the warning: "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." If the text needs any emphasis, let us remember that Stephan was a man of sixty-two and Walther a youth of twenty-eight when his brother, Otto Hermann, pushed him into Stephan's house and left him to confront the "Bishop" with proofs of his guilt unaided and alone.

Stephan, according to the statements of those most intimate with him, had long privately cherished some emigration scheme. He at first thought of going to Australia, but for some reason gave this up and directed his thoughts toward North America. He was greatly strengthened in his determination to emigrate to the United States by his conference and correspondence with Doctor Benjamin Kurtz, who, after the establishment of the theological seminary at Gettysburg, was commissioned by the General Synod to solicit funds in Germany for the

new institution. Stephan seems to have met him during his two years' stay in the fatherland. It is said that he at first thought of leading the colony to Virginia, but Doctor Kurtz advised him against it because Virginia was a slave State. Kurtz seems never to have thought of advising these people to settle near Gettysburg. We may find an explanation after we come to discuss the condition of the Church in America, when the influence of Doctor B. Kurtz and Doctor S. S. Schmucker was at its height. But it is interesting to speculate what might have been the development of Gettysburg and the Church if men like Walther, Loeber, Buenger and Brohm had been placed in charge of the institution while the sons of the sturdy Saxon immigrants helped to fill its halls.

Stephan kept up a correspondence with Doctor Kurtz after the latter returned to America. He also gave some consideration to Michigan as a favorable location for his colony. Finally, through reading a book written by a certain Duden, on the State of Missouri, in which it was depicted with the most glowing colors as a very garden of the gods, he was finally persuaded to decide in favor of this particular location as the most advantageous site for his colony.

"Der Mensch denkt und Gott lenkt," the Germans say. "Man elects and God directs." St. Louis at that time was a frontier town of barely 12,000 inhabitants. The fertile prairies of the Mississippi Valley were still "the Great American Desert." But St. Louis was to become the gateway through which the great stream of German immigration was to come in and take possession of this Land of Promise, dotting its broad fields with thousands upon thousands of happy farm homes where Lutheran prayers are said and Lutheran hymns are sung. And the headquarters for the shepherding of these Lutheran multitudes into congregations honestly confessing "the religion so purely and courageously preached by Luther," with its Concordia Seminary and Concordia Publishing House, was St. Louis. All because a man named Duden wrote a book which was read by a man named Stephan who led a young man named Walther to that place. "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord." This is what Pastor Walther would have said, and we, who have in this chapter so often quoted him, can hardly do better than say these words after him.

Chapter 8

The Emigrant

While Stephan was thus gradually preparing his emigration plans, Pastor Ferdinand Walther was faithfully laboring amid the most trying difficulties at Bräunsdorf. Despite the two "special instruments," the "Herr Superintendent" and the "Herr Schulmeister," who opposed him at every step, his labor was not in vain. The word of God, faithfully preached and faithfully taught, here as always, brought its precious fruit. This, however, did not relieve his distress of conscience. The intolerable religious conditions, the outward and visible signs of the inward spiritual desolation from which he had so recently escaped, remained. He was compelled, if he desired to be a minister of the established Church, to use its rationalistic liturgy, its rationalistic hymnal and its rationalistic school books. He was obliged to fellowship with notorious errorists and heretics, to receive at the Lord's table notorious evil livers, to hear and see the holy things of his Lord's kingdom maliciously desecrated and blasphemed by

unbelieving men in high places. It was not in his power nor in the power of his congregation to change these things. Any attempt in that direction meant new charges, new censures, new rebukes, new legal actions, new court costs and new fines. Still, if he meekly suffered them to be, how could he account himself a faithful minister of Christ and steward of the mysteries of God? What was he to do?

Stephan's call to the oppressed Lutherans of Saxony, asking them to join him in seeking the religious liberty denied them at home by emigrating to America showed him a welcome, and, as he thought, legitimate way of escape. And so Pastor Walther of Bräunsdorf, with his brother, Otto Hermann, who was the vicar of his aged father at Langenschursdorf, resolved to resign and join Stephan's emigration association. Walther did this, Guenther tells us, "with a bleeding heart and after severe inward and outward conflicts."

Doctor Jacobs, who says, "Muhlenberg and Walther are the most prominent figures in the history of the Lutheran Church in America up to this time" (1893), points out that "Walther was by no means a spiritual child of Stephan, completely as, at one time,

he was beneath the influence of the latter. He went to Stephan for advice in an advanced stage of his spiritual struggles." We know this from a letter written to Hochstetter by Buenger, in 1881, shortly before his death, in which he says that Walther had seen Stephan but seldom before leaving Saxony, and that he had already in Germany admitted to him that he lacked personal confidence in him. Stephan looked upon Walther with suspicion, without, however, letting him have any inkling of his real feeling towards him. That Walther with his brother joined the emigration association was most displeasing to Stephan, and he would have prevented it if he could. He feared the independence of the young Bräunsdorf pastor, who, as His Eminence, the Herr Superintendent at Penig, knew, had a theological training and judgment of his own. After the emigrants reached St. Louis, Stephan saw to it that Candidate Kluegel was Walther's roommate, with instructions to keep a sharp eye upon his associate.

Koestering says the same thing: "We have often heard from the lips of these old emigrants that one among them (the pastors and candidates), who at that time was still a very young, but with the people a very

popular minister, had often testified, that even if Stephan and the whole company were sunk in the depths of the sea, the Church would, therefore, not cease to be, because in the corrupt established Church of Germany there was still many hidden believers, whom God would preserve as a holy seed amid an apostate generation. He was not emigrating for Stephan's sake, but in order to assist in the upbuilding of the Church in America. He expected anything else than good days in America, but had rather, in the name of God, resolved to expect the worst, and all ought do the same; then they would remain steadfast in the hour of need and danger and be strong in the Lord and in the power of His strength." "These words plainly show that this beloved man was no common Stephanist, that there was in him a different spirit than that which lived in Stephan and his adorers. Stephan knew this only too well; therefore he hated this man from the bottom of his heart, considered him his Judas, and would gladly have hindered his coming to America."

Koestering's language is always vigorous. At times he gossips like Pepys. But he leaves us in no doubt that Walther was never a spiritual child nor a blind, unquestioning

follower of Stephan. He also gives us some idea of the thoughts which filled the young pastor's heart during the long ocean voyage upon a sailing vessel, where a man feels his own littleness and the immensity of God's greatness as in no other place.

Walther resigned his office and preached his farewell sermon at Bräunsdorf on the 16th Sunday after Trinity, 1838. His congregation listened to him with sobs and and tears. Several families, resolved to emigrate with him, said farewell to their homes and friends. The die was cast, the brief Bräunsdorf pastorate ended, the course for the new world set.

Stephan's call met with prompt response. The determination to emigrate with America as the goal, had been definitely resolved upon at a meeting held at Dresden, about Pentecost, 1836. From that time on, all necessary preparations were quietly made. Stephan said he was awaiting a sign from God. Finally, after having been arrested in November, 1837, and suspended from office, he, early in 1838, declared, not only before his Dresden congregation, but wherever he had adherents, that the time had come to act upon the words spoken by God to Abraham, the father of the faithful: "Get thee out of

thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee."

By September 4, 1838, 707 persons had declared their intention to emigrate, and joined the association. Dresden and vicinity furnished the larger number, 240 souls; Leipzig, 31; Frohna and vicinity, Pastor Keyl's congregation, 109; Lunzenau, where Candidate Kuehn had been pastor, now served by Pastor Buerger, 84; Eichenberg, near Cahla, Pastor Loeber's congregation, with some people from Halle and Naumburg, 108; Paitzdorf and vicinity, Pastor Gruber's charge, 48; Langenschursdorf, the home of the Walthers, Pastor Otto Hermann Walther, 16; Bräunsdorf, Pastor Carl Ferdinand Walther, 19; individuals from other places, 20. The small number of persons who might be suspected of having been personal adherents of the two Walthers, is worthy of notice. Out of the 707, there were all told but 35; 16 who followed the elder, and 19 who followed the younger Walther.

In the emigration company there were 7 pastors, 8 candidates for the ministry, 1 schoolmaster, 3 candidate teachers, 3 doctors of medicine, 1 doctor of laws, 1 lawyer,

2 artists, a number of state officials and merchants; the great majority, however, were farmers and artisans. These people, pastors, teachers and officials resigned their positions, farmers sold their farms, physicians sacrificed their practice, artists and artisans forsook their occupations. What was worse, husbands left their wives and wives their husbands, parents left their children and children their parents. All left their ancestral homes with its precious associations and customs, its time-honored institutions and priceless legacies. They were fleeing from Babel, so they thought; hoping to save their souls alive and preserve the pure word and sacraments for their posterity.

Before leaving Germany they established a common fund for the defraying of all common expenses, the establishment of church and school, the purchase of lands, and the advancing of credits to people lacking means of their own. Freewill offerings had placed 123,987 thalers into this fund, or *Kreditkasse.* They purchased a large theological library, a pipe organ, a collection of church music, instruments for a band, three church bells, the sacred vessels, etc. They sent a committee to Bremen and chartered four ships for their exclusive use (to which a fifth

was afterwards added), and made arrangements to assemble and sail together from that port. Everything was worked out with slow going German thoroughness and attention to detail. But they made one great mistake. They should have sent a competent committee to America to spy out the land and make arrangements for the reception of the colony. Instead, they agreed to sail for New Orleans and then proceed by Mississippi River boats to St. Louis, their gathering place in the new world.

Strangely enough, in view of the disorder inseparable from such an undertaking and the opposition it was bound to provoke, all went well. The entire company gathered at Bremen and took ship. But one family was detained, the widowed mother and two sisters of Walther's intimate friend, Buenger. She was untruthfully accused of having two orphan children in her care. Buenger, of course, remained with his mother until the accusation was disproved and a Saxon court order directed the Bremen authorities to allow "the widowed Frau Pastor Buenger," with her charges, to proceed on her journey. The other emigrants had sailed, and so Buenger, with his mother and two of his sisters, came to America via New York,

sailing with the "Constitution," which left Bremerhafen December 21, 1838. There was a small group of emigrants in New York, who, upon Stephan's advice, had traveled from Berlin with the intention of joining the Saxons after their arrival at St. Louis. The Buenger family, with these so-called "Berliners," or "Prussians," reached St. Louis shortly after Pentecost, 1839. Their arrival added another one hundred souls to the Stephan colony.

The first of the Saxon emigrants to leave Bremerhafen sailed with the "Copernicus," under leadership of Pastor Buenger. She left November 3, 1838, and reached New Orleans December 31, the last day of the year. The second ship, with Pastor Ferdinand Walther and his brother-in-law, Pastor Keyl, the "Johann Georg," ran out a few hours after the "Copernicus," but she did not make port until January 5, 1839. The third ship, the "Republic," left nine days later, on November 12, and sailed into New Orleans January 12, 1838. Pastor Loeber came over with this ship. The "Olbers," the fourth ship with the Pastors Stephan and Otto Hermann Walther, whom Stephan had selected for his chaplain, did not leave until November 18. She made New Orleans

January 20, 1839. The "Amalia," a fifth ship, also left Bremerhafen the same day. Nothing was ever heard of her, and she was undoubtedly lost at sea with all on board. Our Walther was to leave with this ship, but for some reason was refused passage on her. He then sought passage on the "Johann Georg," which left fifteen days before. All places were filled. Finally a young man, seeing his anxiety to sail, offered him his place and sailed on another ship. Walther gratefully accepted, and sailed on the "Johann Georg," under the young man's name. God's gracious providence prevented his sailing with the "Amalia," just as it prevented his friend Buenger, through the detention of his mother, from sailing with her, although he fervently pleaded with earnest daily prayer that his mother might be released before the last ship with his brethren in the faith had set sail. God had a work for His servants to do, and through those little things, upon which great events so often hinge, graciously and wonderfully guided their footsteps. Walther sails with his brother-in-law, Pastor Keyl, for the mutual strengthening of their faith; Buenger travels over New York, strengthens the brethren at that place, and leads the Berliners to Missouri. Incidentally, he is

also preserved from the folly, so bitterly deplored by Keyl and the others, of recognizing Stephan as his "God-given Bishop." For Stephan, after having first during the seavoyage persuaded the people who traveled with him to confer this dignity upon him, somehow managed to persuade the balance of the emigrants, with but few exceptions, that it would be to their advantage to follow the example of the people who had come directly under his influence. He urged that there must be a central authority to direct all temporal and spiritual affairs, and, while he wished only to be the bishop's adviser, since there was no one else to fill the position it would be best to give it to him. Accordingly, during the trip up the Mississippi, a formal act of homage was formulated, which, a few days before they reached St. Louis, was subscribed by almost all of the emigrant company. They therein pledged themselves with an oath to render implicit obedience in all things to their "God-given Bishop," to guard against all thoughts implying any lack of confidence in him and his doings, and to live, suffer and die under the episcopal form of Church government thus established by "Bishop" Stephan, who from this time on was regularly mentioned in the public papers

of the congregation. Ferdinand Walther was not greatly impressed by these strange doings. He refused, for reasons of conscience, to subscribe to this act of allegiance and homage which Keyl, who had subscribed to it, afterwards very correctly declared to have been a piece of blasphemous folly. He also stood ready to openly oppose Stephan the moment he set up the claim that he held his episcopal office by divine right, and was, therefore, the occupant of a higher order of the ministry than the other pastors. So when Stephan's sin became public and Brohm urged Walther not to believe and say such things of *Seiner Hochwurden* ("His Eminence"), Walther was quite ready to rejoin: "*Sag doch lieber, Seiner Nichtswuerden*" ("Rather say, His Worthlessness"). And if the Missouri Synod, the constitution and organization of which is so largely Walther's work, in selecting names for its various offices and officers, carefully refrained from the use of the official nomenclature which obtains in Germany, it was no doubt somewhat due to the repugnance Walther and its founders felt toward "Bishop" Stephan and his short-lived bishopric.

For the moment all went well. There was no open opposition to Stephan and his as-

sumption of ecclesiastical dignities and titles. True, the course of events, when taken together with the loss of the "Amalia," could not fail to exert a depressing influence upon many hearts. But the emigrants were nearing the end of a long voyage, and when at noon, February 19, 1839, four Mississippi River boats began to unload their passengers at St. Louis, adding about 750 souls to its 12,000 inhabitants, the general feeling was joy rather than grief. A large house on Broadway, between St. Louis and Bremen Streets, near a landmark called "Indian Hill," which has long since disappeared, was rented as a dwelling for the leaders of the emigrant company, while its members scattered to find shelter wherever such was to be found. At last Walther was in St. Louis, where he was to live and labor until the day of his death, May 7, 1887, a period of forty-six years full of blessing for the Church of America.

Koestering, who as pastor at Altenburg, Perry County, Mo., availed himself of the opportunity to carefully examine all documents of this emigration association, preserved in the archives of the Altenburg congregation, insists that it was the intention of the leaders of these people to establish a so-

called "Christian Church State," with a bishop at its head here in America, "from whence all light and knowledge was to emanate over the whole country." A somewhat ambitious scheme, but not one whit more so than those cherished by the many communistic religious associations which lived their brief life in this new world. Koestering says: "We must admit that this association had formulated the best plans and had perfected the most splendid arrangements for the securing of a great success; moreover, the wealth of the association was great (125,000 thalers), so that with prudent housekeeping and a wise use of these means great things might have been achieved."

God had greater achievements in mind than the establishment of a wealthy communistic colony. And the chosen vessel for their achievement was not "Bishop" Stephan, but Pastor Ferdinand Walther, whom, to distinguish him from his elder brother, the people affectionately called "the little Walther" (*"der kleine Walther"*). David, not Saul, was to build and defend Israel.

Chapter 9

Heavy Days

When on Jubilate Sunday, 1897, the Missouri Synod celebrated its fiftieth anniversary, Doctor A. L. Graebner preached a German sermon before the united congregations of Detroit, Mich. The great assembly packed the Grey's Armory to the doors. He had published the first volume of his "History of the Lutheran Church in America" in 1892, and had the material for the second volume well in hand. It is a great pity that he failed to complete the work before his death, for Graebner, who had a historical mind, had gone into the documentary history of the period which antedated the organization of the Synod with great thoroughness. He summed it up in the text which he took for his Detroit anniversary sermon, a word spoken by David out of the depths of his own personal experience in the 18th Psalm: "Thy gentleness hath made me great" (v. 35). In Luther's version it reads: *"Wenn du mich demütigst, machst du mich gross"* ("When Thou humblest me, Thou makest me great"). The Saxon emigrants

were humbled, most profoundly humiliated and humbled, and that through the very man whom they had followed as another Moses. This especially applies to Walther, who, describing the experience of his friend Buenger, again describes his own. He says: "Not only did the many fine hopes with which our Buenger, too, had emigrated in one brief moment vanish like dreams before the eyes of his soul, but the dreadful vision of a future full of great spiritual and bodily distress presented itself to his spirit. Still, great as the confidence had been with which he had hitherto clung to Stephan, Stephan's person, praise God! had never been the foundation of his hope, but nothing else than God's word and God's grace in Christ. Therefore, he did not now despair. Yes, just at this moment, when God, so to speak, had wrenched the false support to which he had clung out of his hands, our Buenger, more than others, pressed forward to a great joy of believing."

These words apply to Walther just as much as if he had written them of himself, instead of writing them of his Jonathan and fellow-in-affliction.

St. Louis was not the goal of these Saxon emigrants, but only a meeting place. The

fourth paragraph of the voluminous articles adopted by the association says: "The place for settlement in the United States of North America is to be chosen in one of the Western States, in Missouri, Illinois or Indiana. For this reason (¶ 5, Route) the City of St. Louis, located in the center of all these states, and their chief place of business, is to be the first point of destination." Accordingly, after promptly arranging regular Sunday services, for which purpose Christ Protestant Episcopal Church loaned them the use of its basement, and establishing a school for their children, the emigrants began to seek out a desirable location for their colony. The whole Middle West was open to them, for they commanded what was in those days a very respectable capital for investment. Almost four months elapsed, during which most of the emigrants depended upon the common treasury for their support, before a place was found to suit the wishes of Stephan. The *Kreditkasse* began to show signs of speedy depletion. Finally, after months of inaction, a selection of site was made and a tract of 4400 acres, about 110 miles south of St. Louis, purchased for the sum of $10,000, about $2.50 per acre, when government land was open for homestead or for sale at $1.25

per acre. Stephan considered the site more beautiful than the Land of Promise itself, which he, of course, had never seen. It is a hilly, broken country with a poor soil in the present Perry County, which the persistent German industry of these first settlers has developed into a fair state of fertility. It had a good steamboat landing, an important thing in those days, which the colonists named Wittenberg. Five miles inland they located a village site which they called Altenburg. They gave fatherland names to all of their locations—Dresden, Frohna, Seelitz, Johannesburg and Paitzdorf. If not miserably homesick, they were at least not willing to forget the mother country. Climatic conditions were unfavorable. It was an ague or chills and fever country. Not a few of the colonists had become ill during the stay in St. Louis. A number had died without ever seeing the colony site they had come so far to secure. After their removal from St. Louis to the colony site, the unaccustomed climate, privations, work and pioneer conditions brought them down by the dozen. The removal took place before Pentecost, 1839, the last group with Pastor Loeber leaving St. Louis on May 29. A few of them remained in St. Louis, where they

had found employment. Their presence in the colony was not immediately needed. Still, Stephan intended that they, too, should come to Perry County, and so he directed that they were to bind themselves in no position for longer than one day. Here, again, man elected and God directed. This little group, which was first served by Pastor Loeber, later by O. H. Walther, became the nucleus of Trinity Church, St. Louis, for St. Louis, and not Altenburg, was to become the center "from whence light and knowledge were to emanate over the whole country."

Stephan also removed to his "Land of Promise" shortly before Pentecost, 1839, for all things had to be done according to his episcopal directions. The settlement was organized into the following parishes: 1. Wittenberg and Frohna, Pastor E. G. W. Keyl; 2. Altenburg, Pastor G. H. Loeber; 3. Seelitz, Pastor M. Buerger; 4. Dresden and Johannesburg, Pastor C. F. W. Walther; 5. Paitzdorf, Pastor C. F. Gruber. And so the young pastor who had resigned his office at Bräunsdorf to escape conditions which seemed most intolerable, was again pastor of a congregation under conditions which, although still hidden from him, were even more intolerable. "Let every man abide in

the same calling wherein he was called" has an especial application for the holy ministry. Running away, instead of waiting to be put out, usually means new and increased troubles. Luther protested and waited until they put him out. Walther would have saved himself some qualms of conscience if he had followed Luther's example.

Any man who has ever seen new settlers from Germany, who have never handled an axe or a rifle, go into "the forest primeval" to chop out a clearing, can imagine the condition of these helpless, hapless Saxon emigrants. To make matters worse, Stephan insisted upon planning and directing all their activities. Instead of building log cabins, planting a few potatoes, some corn and making a little garden, they began to make roads, build bridges, clear up meadows, etc., in a perfectly senseless attempt to make the wilderness look like Neiderfrohna and Paitzdorf at home. They lived and kept their goods in camps which offered them no real protection against the weather. Their precious belongings spoiled, their wives and little ones became ill, strong men lay down in despair. Meanwhile Stephan acted as if their treasury was inexhaustible. He used 4000 thalers in seven months (three of them

spent on shipboard) for his own household and personal comfort. Koestering says, "He fattened himself like a bullock for the sacrifice." Vigorous language again, but not too vigorous when we remember that he spent his time in designing his episcopal robes and planning his episcopal palace; and that he actually told these poor people from the pulpit (they worshiped in a camp or bower): "Your laziness and idleness is the cause of the Church of God still being under a bower. And, what is worse, your bishop is compelled to live in a hog pen." Whereupon they immediately and obediently began the erection of a magnificently planned palace for His Eminence, the "God-given Bishop."

On Rogate Sunday, the fifth Sunday after Easter, 1839, Pastor Gotthold Heinrich Loeber preached an earnest sermon to the little company of people who remained in St. Louis after Stephan and the other emigrants had removed to the colony. Pastor Loeber, one of the oldest of the ministers associated with Stephan, a man of deep theological knowledge and ripened experience, had been named by Stephan to act as his vicar. For some reason the other ministers, with the exception of the elder Walther and Brohm, were still in the city. These two, Otto Her-

mann Walther and Theodore Brohm, had accompanied Stephan, the former as his chaplain.

The selfsame day on which the congregation had heard Pastor Loeber's sermon, two of its members, young women, came to him privately and separately and confessed themselves to have been guilty of gross immorality with Stephan. Neither knew of the other's sin nor of the other's intention to make such confession. That they should have told the untruth is impossible. They accused themselves, not Stephan; their self-accusation was calculated to bring them only shame and reproach; and if disproved they were bound to be excommunicated and cast out of the colony. Still Loeber had his doubts. He feared a possible slander or plot, a horrible mistake of some kind. He confided in Walther, and it says much for Walther's character that he should have selected just him, the youngest of the Saxon pastors, for his confidant. Walther said: "I see in these revelations a gracious answer to my prayers. No later than last night I on my couch fervently called upon God to deliver me out of my distress of conscience, either by showing me the utter lack of foundation of my doubts with respect to Stephan, so that I might unhesi-

tatingly follow him, or, if Stephan is a false spirit, to so reveal him that I might with good conscience forsake him." He added: "And if you all remain with Stephan, I shall not go one step further with him, even if I, as a result, were to die in some roadside ditch." The young pastor, besides theological knowledge, had some determination of character, a very essential thing to-day as it was then.

The two unfortunate young women had agreed to make their statements in writing, and, if necessary, to appear before court and testify to their correctness. This very much simplified matters, for it was all-important that any steps to be taken were to be dictated by real pastoral wisdom acting in strictest accordance with the practice of the Church as laid down by the word of God. A meeting of the pastors and the leaders of the emigration association, the so-called "Council," was called and the matter presented for their consideration. The meeting unanimously resolved to send Ferdinand Walther, in the company of a layman (a journeyman shoemaker) to Perry County to confront Stephan with the written proofs of his guilt. It was plainly the object of these men to spare him the shame of a public exposure

by forcing a private admission of guilt, together with his resignation and an equitable adjustment of the affairs committed to his charge. Meanwhile rumors of Stephan's conduct were spreading through the St. Louis congregation, filling the hearts of the poor, deceived people with consternation and shame.

Walther accepted the trying commission, and with his companion set out for the Wittenberg landing the week before Pentecost. Stephan had left strict directions forbidding anybody's coming to the colony without his permission or by his order. Unfamiliar with the river, where the boats, because of the swift current, always turn and land with the bow up stream, Walther, who had been given the mouth of the Obrazo River as his destination, was unceremoniously pushed off the boat at night, landing, as he thought, on the Illinois side. Seeing the light of a fire in the distance, he, with his companion, made his way toward it until they came to the banks of the Obrazo. Here, by some good fortune, they found a small skiff, crossed over and met Stephan among the group at the fire. Astonished at the unexpected visit, Stephan only said, "See where you can find a lodging for the night," and left for his own dwelling.

That night Walther told one of the candidates, in Latin, what had brought him to the settlement. A lawyer, lying awake, understood the conversation. The next morning Walther went to Stephan. He met his brother, Otto Hermann, who had been taken in by an American family, before Stephan's house. The brothers embraced, but before they could exchange a sentence the door was suddenly opened, and Hermann Walther pushed Ferdinand into the house and Stephan's presence, leaving the "little Walther" to fight his battle alone. Stephan, despite the written testimony in Walther's hands, persisted in denying any guilt, declared the charges to be a malicious slander, took Walther to task for coming to the colony uncalled, made a bitter attack upon Pastor Loeber, whom he called a poltroon, who permitted the people too many privileges, etc. There was nothing to be done. Walther then went to the leaders of the colony and presented the matter to them. Their consternation was indiscribable. The jurist, Doctor Adolph Marbach, a strong man, burst into tears when the written evidence was placed into his hands. Doctor of Laws C. E. Vehse again and again struck his forehead with his fist, saying, "O Doctor of

Laws, O Doctor of Laws, how could you be so deceived!" It was for Walther, a youth of twenty-eight, to comfort these men. "Now," said he, "all will be well, for now it will appear that our emigration is a work of God, since we will be rid of this tyrant of conscience" (*Gewissenstyran*).

On the Monday after Whitsunday he preached in the bower or camp which served the purpose of a church, taking the place of his brother, who, as Stephan's chaplain, was to have conducted the service, but who gave up his place to Ferdinand while he preached at the landing. Walther took John 3:20 for his text: "For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved." While he made no direct reference to the events of the last few days, his hearers could not but feel that some shocking offence had been given which had hitherto been hidden from the light of day. Now the rumor of Stephan's misconduct also spread through the colony, crushing the hearts of the poor people who had looked up to him as to an angel of God. The following Sunday Stephan himself occupied his own pulpit. But two persons came to hear him. The apprehensions of the St. Louis ministers, candi-

dates and members of the "Council," who feared a division among the emigrants, were unfounded.

Meanwhile Ferdinand Walther had returned to St. Louis to make his report upon the result of his representations to Stephan and conditions in the colony. Not long after the majority of the St. Louis congregation, with Ferdinand Walther and the other pastors and candidates, went to Wittenberg by boat to confer with their brethren of the settlement. The members of the "Council" went to Stephan's house and again presented the charges, admonishing him to repentance. He denied unto the end.

Upon the advice of their own legal authorities, who, as Hochstetter remarks, doubtless knew very much more of the laws of the Kingdom of Saxony than of the laws of the State of Missouri, the "Council," in strict accordance with Stephan's *Auswanderungs Ordnung* (Articles of Association), made its decision. He was deposed from his office, expelled from the colony and the State of Missouri, and his private property confiscated in restitution for the funds he had misappropriated and wasted. He was searched and deprived of the funds hidden on his person, because, so he said, he had

foreseen that he would treacherously and wickedly be thrust out helpless into the world. Still, the common treasury was 1100 piastres short. He afterwards entered suit for $3000 against the emigrant colony, but was awarded damages only for the loss of his personal belongings. Then they rowed him across the Mississippi and landed him on the Illinois side, near a place, says Koestering, "well-known to all sailors on the Mississippi as the 'Devil's Bakeoven,' because there is at that point a dangerous place in the river, where many a ship and many a human life has been lost."

His implication is plain. But did he make complete shipwreck of his faith? Did he become a castaway? Was he forever lost? Who can tell? Koestering, therefore, only says: "He died, in all probability, as he had lived—in his sins." Even that is not certainly known. Without forcing scriptural allusions there is something in the tragic fate of this man which again and again reminds us of Israel's first king. Let us not overlook that David was the first to mourn over him. "Then David took hold on his clothes and rent them; and likewise all the men that were with him; and they mourned, and wept, and fasted until even, for Saul, and for Jona-

than, his son, and for the people of the Lord, and for the house of Israel; for they were fallen by the sword" (2 Sam. 1:11, 12).

Chapter 10

Clearing the Ground

Years ago, in the backwoods of Michigan and Wisconsin, one could often see a slashing of virgin timber after it had been fired for clearing. The mighty trees had been ruthlessly cut down in windrows and then on some favorable day set on fire. The result was complete, black, bare desolation. There was no sign whatever of any green, living thing. Only charred logs, stumps, ashes, sad and mournful as death and despair. One could hardly bear to look at it. And yet, it was the first indispensable step toward a future harvest. The ground had to be cleared before the good seed could take root and grow. The condition of the Saxon emigrants after the events described in the last chapter was exactly that of a burnt-over slashing. A heavy pall of blank hopeless despair descended upon the whole colony. Even Walther, now that the strain was past and the inevitable reaction set in, became seriously ill. Unable to perform the duties of his office, he, for a time, lived with Pastor Keyl and his sister, recuperating and reading

Luther and the Lutheran fathers, which he found in Keyl's splendid library. Koestering says something about his "lucid intervals" (*die lichten Augenblicke, die er hatte*), which can only mean those days when he was relatively free from despondency and anxious care.

A number of circumstances combined to increase the despondency of the unfortunate people. First, the judgment of the world. Like David, Stephan had "given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme," and they took great occasion to avail themselves of the opportunity. The medium for the expression of this reproach was a German paper published in St. Louis, *Der Anzeiger des Westens*. Its editor and correspondents saw to it that the name "Stephanist," which they unfeelingly attached to these poor deceived people, became a term of opprobrium and reproach. "Their name was made to stink" among their fellow-men. Even Christian people shunned their company, fearing to share their reproach.

In a somewhat hopeless attempt to remove this offence, the Saxon ministers, upon their return to St. Louis after the trial and deposition of Stephan, did what under ordi-

nary circumstances is seldom a wise thing to do—they made a public statement in the press. They frankly and briefly admitted Stephan's guilt, referred to a mistaken defence they had previously made, pleaded their ignorance of any wrongdoing on his part, gave thanks to God for having opened their eyes, renounced all connection with him, and expressed the hope that they might be spared the damaging consequences of his great offence. This declaration was signed on May 27, 1839, by Gotthold H. Loeber, pastor; Ernst G. W. Keyl, pastor; Ernst Moritz Buerger, pastor; Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther, pastor; (and at the same time in the name of their two absent brethren in office), Otto Hermann Walther, pastor; Maximilian Oertel, pastor.

This Oertel, a pupil of the Barmen Missionshaus, had come to St. Louis as pastor of the "Berliners" from New York. He soon left, returned to New York, became a convert to Rome, and editor of a German Catholic religious paper. Koestering calls him "a miserable 'Mameluk' and apostate," and says, "He permitted himself to be kissed and taken into her lap by the Roman harlot." Koestering never leaves any doubt as to his meaning. At any rate, Oertel's apostasy

meant more and increased offence—another charred black stump for time to remove.

The declaration of the Saxon pastors was published by *Der Anzeiger des Westens,* June 1, 1839. It hardly had the desired effect, for Walther, who, after the death of his brother, Otto Hermann, became pastor of Trinity Church, St. Louis, in 1841, together with this congregation, published a similar statement. It was provoked by attacks published in the *Anzeiger des Westens,* at the instance of a certain Sproede. After pointing to and reiterating the frank statement published in 1839, Walther, with his congregation, says this: "It is not becoming for us to judge whether or not we now, as we profess, are striving in doctrine and life to reach the high goal set for us by the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Let him who desires to convince himself come and see and hear; our church, our congregational meetings and our homes are open to every man. We are not sneaking about in corners, but we are acting openly before all the world." The last sentence contains the point. The world cares very little for public statements and protestations. The one thing that the world respects is Christian living. The only thing to do with a public offence is to live it down.

It is slow work, but it never fails of success.

Dire bodily need and great distress also promptly followed Stephan's removal. It would have come in any event. The four months of inaction at St. Louis, the land purchase, together with other equally imprudent purchases of stock, implements, etc., above all, the foolish wastefulness of the "bishop," who was so unquestioningly followed by his blinded adherents, had exhausted the funds of the *Kreditkasse* (common treasury). The fearful disappointment shattered all confidence in their leaders as well as the confidence of the people in each other. Repeated revision not alone of all accounts but of all plans and arrangements made under Stephan's leadership was the order of the day. This led to a complete abandonment of all communistic schemes and ideals, together with a division of the 4400-acre tract into small holdings, which were awarded to the various colonists upon a basis which, however equitable it might seem to be under the circumstances, was still bound to cause great dissatisfaction. For instance, Pastor Keyl, who had cheerfully placed the major part of his paternal inheritance, a sum of 5360 thalers, into the *Kreditkasse*, received in their stead a little piece

of land near Frohna, valued at about $600. Fortunately there was a small habitable building on it, and so Keyl managed to house his large library and the magnificent Vienna grand piano he had brought with him from Germany. For Keyl, like Walther, was also a gifted musician, and he often entertained his American neighbors at Frohna with a masterly rendering of Bach or Mendelssohn, at a time when the limit of musical culture in this country was set by a backwoods fiddler playing "Turkey in the Straw" or "Fisher's Hornpipe."

The dissolution of the emigration association and abandonment of communal administration promptly promoted freedom of action and gave opportunity for individual initiative. The various families immediately began to establish their own hearths and homes. But these Saxon linen weavers and stocking knitters at first made poor progress with their clearing and house building. They usually returned at night from their unaccustomed tasks with bleeding hands and aching bodies. Their American neighbors said they would starve, and, from all appearances, they were right. At times they were reduced to making a meal of roasted corn or grinding cornmeal in a coffee mill. With true back-

woods helpfulness their American neighbors assisted them with their advice and charity. One of their greatest difficulties was the lack of water supply during the summer droughts, when the streams dried up and the wells gave out. Pastor Buerger writes: "My wife and children lacked a drop of water in their fever heat." Later they began to build deep cisterns, hewing the excavations out of the rock underlying the poor soil. The unaccustomed summer heat and prevalent malaria also did their part to dishearten these poor people, who, in their struggles, were often overcome by intense fatigue and illness, if not by discouragement and despair. Some of their strongest men died, leaving helpless families to be cared for by others. "All of this," says Koestering, "had to come that they might be weaned away from putting their trust in man and cast themselves into the arms of God's gracious providence." Nor did this providence fail them. With His help, they managed to overcome all difficulties.

Their first result, however, was a strengthening of the St. Louis congregation, for many of the colonists returned to the city, where they found employment and a living for their families. St. Louis, and not Perry

County, was, by God's gracious leading, to become the center of "Missouri" Lutheranism in America.

But far heavier to bear than these outward trials, the reproach of the world and the bitter, biting poverty of their outward circumstances, were the qualms and accusations of conscience which now assailed them. They were Lutheran Christians, and as such desired, above all other things, to remain faithful to their Lord and His holy Church. They had come to America with the hope of preserving the most holy treasures of the Reformation Church for themselves and their children. And now? The acting bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church correctly gauged the situation. He said to Doctor Vehse, who spoke of the recent happenings as a dire misfortune to the Saxon emigrants: "Not only for you, sir, it's a misfortune for us all, for the whole Christianity." "He distinctly implied," says Vehse, "that all ministers of all confessions in America would suffer through these things." And, judging by all appearances, he was right.

Doctor Jacobs describes the spiritual conflicts confronting these people, and especially their pastors, as follows: "Was not the emi-

gration a sin? Were they warranted, without a clearer indication of Providence, in abandoning the places where they had been put by God's call in Germany? Were they actually ministers, properly called and properly administering the word and sacraments to their congregations? Should not those who had come against God's will, and with duties still unfulfilled in Germany, return and be released from their previous obligations in a legal way before they could expect God's blessing upon their labors in the New World? Such were the questions they discussed with one another, and keenly pondered in their hearts. A most tender conscience did not cease to harass Walther with accusations concerning his want of fidelity as a pastor, and to suggest that one who had been so remiss in duty should abandon the office."

Pastor E. M. Buerger, at Seelitz, suspended himself from office, and declined to administer the holy communion, because he held that he was not and could not be lawfully called by the Seelitz congregation. Pastor Loeber, who had resigned his office in Germany without permission of the civil authorities, was tempted to now resign again and either return to Germany or remain in America as a layman. Doctor Marbach,

the jurist, had the gravest doubts as to whether the Saxon congregations were Christian churches with the power of calling ministers and excommunicating impenitent sinners. A certain Sproede emphatically insisted that they were not. Both he and Marbach refused to attend public services, contenting themselves with family worship at home. The candidates refused to preach at the landing, and questioned whether they could be lawfully called or act as vicars to the pastors in office. Earnest Christians, like Tax Collector Barthel, were inclined to agree with them and Doctor Marbach. Doctor Vehse wrote on these questions and published his writings. The confusion was indescribable. Walther himself is filled with doubt as to the lawfulness of his call. He writes to Fuerbringer: "I can find no peace. My heart is in deep distress. According to what you tell me, a congregation certainly has the power in such cases to dismiss its pastor called unlawfully and without proper knowledge of his person. Would it, under the present disquiet of conscience, perhaps not be more advisable to persuade the congregation to either dismiss me, or, at least, to suspend me until there is complete light in this matter? Or ought I not request my dismis-

sal, or at least suspend myself? You can readily think with what distress I now study the many sermons which lie before me" (he means his own) "and how they will undoubtedly bear the stamp of my heart loaded with doubt, shame, disquiet, helplessness and uncertainty. Oh, how bitter are the fruits of sin, of servitude to man, of unfaithfulness and of a falling away from God's word!

"If possible, come in person to me, poor, lame being, and if it is only for an hour; if you cannot, write me and send me what Spener, according to that note, says of dismissal" (Remotion).

Walther signs: "Your God's deserved wrath-bearing Walther." The letter is dated "Johnson's Farm, April 14, 1840," almost a year after Stephan's expulsion from the colony. But his doubts and spiritual trials continue, for in November of the same year his brother writes him a beautiful letter of comfort, in which this sentence occurs: "One thing is needful. This also applies to you. You lack only this one thing in which all else is given. Your excerpts concerning the call avail you nothing if you do not first assure yourself of your call in Him unto His everlasting kingdom of grace. In Him all is then right and all that is crooked straight."

He also speaks of Ferdinand Walther's long and serious illness and his present weakness of body and soul. This illness was in no small part a result of the bitter self-accusation and self-reproach with which he, together with the other pastors, harassed themselves and each other. That the people should reproach them for having failed to sooner discover Stephan's sin and blindly following him, led them into their present distress was to be expected. But the pastors and candidates by far outdid the people. In a letter to his brother, Ferdinand Walther exclaims: "Poor congregation which has such defiled shepherds!" In his letter to Fuerbringer, quoted above, he speaks of "the fearful stains which certainly attach to me." He means his doubt, his uncertainty, his former adherence to Stephan, his following of his leadership, his disquiet, his helplessness, his servitude to man, his having departed from God's word, his having been unfaithful, etc. Our greatest troubles and the hardest to bear are those we make ourselves. These poor Saxon ministers and candidates made themselves trouble upon trouble. "Some of the candidates," Koestering says, "walked about loaded down with melancholy, as if mentally disordered."

The discussions and debates were unending. It was impossible to escape them. In the homes, in the gatherings of neighbors, in the meetings of the clergy, the same questions were raised again and again. Their solution seemed impossible. A splitting up of the colony into a pitiable host of little separatistic groups seemed inevitable. The pendulum, which under "Bishop" Stephan had swung so far toward Rome, now swung back just as far toward the Donatistic error, which denies the character of a Church to any but a perfecly pure and sinless Church body. These people, who had held themselves to be the only true Church visible on earth, now doubted or denied that they were Christians or a Church at all. They, who had been inclined to make the validity of the holy sacraments dependent upon ordination at the hands of Stephan, now questioned the validity of any and every official ministerial act. They, who had formerly been tempted to limit salvation to a use of the means of grace dispensed by Stephan and his adherents, now questioned the possibility of their being saved under any condition or circumstance whatsoever. In short, their whole emigration, which they had once looked upon as a great work of God, now seemed to be only

a work of the devil himself. Could self-humiliation go any further than that? A bare, black, burnt-over slashing, a picture of death and despair. And yet, although men could not see it, it was the peremptory condition of sound and vigorous development. The ground was cleared for the harvest to come. Nor was there a long wait for the sowing of the seed, and a prompt fulfillment of the precious promise: "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isa. 55: 11).

Chapter 11

The Planting

One is almost tempted to select the word "Reconstruction" for the head of this chapter. Men use it of their doings, but their attempts at reconstruction are always more or less a failure. God Himself is the great Reconstructor. He casts down only to lift up; He takes away only to give; He humbles only to exalt; He destroys only to build.

It was so here. As we look back to-day, the first token of His gracious leadings among these people for the upbuilding of His Lutheran Zion in this country, was a notice which appeared in the St. Louis *Anzeiger des Westens,* the same paper in which the Saxon pastors, on June 1, 1839, had published their humiliating declaration, pleading that they might be spared the damaging consequences of Stephan's great offence and their blind adherence to him. This other notice was published a few weeks later, in the summer of 1839. It read as follows:

An Institution of Instruction and Education

We, the undersigned, intend to establish an institution of instruction and education, which distinguishes

itself from ordinary elementary schools, especially by this, that it comprises, besides the ordinary branches, all gymnasium sciences (*Gymnasialwissenschaften*) necessary to a true Christian and scientific education, as: Religion, the Latin, Greek and Hebrew, German, French and English languages, History, Geography, Mathematics, Physics, Natural History, Elementary Philosophy, Music, Drawing. The pupils of our institution are to be so far advanced in the above named studies, that they, after absolving a complete course of study, shall be qualified for university studies. The esteemed parents, who may desire to place their children with our institution, are requested to make inquiries regarding its plan and arrangements of Pastor O. H. Walther, in St. Louis, Poplar Street, No. 14, between First and Second Streets. Instructions are to begin, God willing, on the 1st of October of this year.

The settlement of the German Lutherans in Perry County, near the Obrazo, August 13, 1839.

C. Ferdinand Walther,
Ottomar Fuerbringer,
Th. Jul. Brohm,
Joh. Fr. Buenger.

So here was an "Institution of Instruction," a full-fledged college, with a curriculum and faculty which might bear comparison with Yale or Harvard of those days, at "the Settlement of the German Lutherans in Perry County, near the Obrazo." Indeed, it might be said to go beyond them, for its faculty knew the difference between a college and a university; and the German university was not transplanted to America until the

founding of Johns Hopkins University in 1876. It is interesting to note that Horace Mann, who inaugurated the so-called educational revival in America, after making a careful study of the school system of Germany, established the first American normal school in Massachusetts in 1839, the same year which saw the establishment of the college "near the Obrazo," and the beginning of the great work of the "Missourians" in the field of Christian education. At the twenty-fifth anniversary of Johns Hopkins University, President Angell, of Michigan, seconding a splendid acknowledgment made by President Eliot, of Harvard, said this: "What makes a great university is not bricks and mortar, but men." What makes any school is not bricks and mortar, but men. The school founded in Perry County had a faculty composed of men. If proof were needed for this statement we might point to the fact that the members of the faculty with their own hands erected the log cabin college building. And the first name on the faculty list was C. Ferdinand W. Walther.

As usual, it is difficult, or rather impossible, to say who first broached the idea of founding a full-fledged gymnasium (for such it was) in the backwoods of Perry County.

Walther gives the best account of its establishment in his biography of Buenger, whom he calls "a practical genius," because he with his two brothers and sisters, upon his arrival in the settlement, promptly built a log house for the family. Speaking of the college, he says: "Although at that time the large number of pastors and candidates, who had also emigrated, assured the emigrant congregations a sufficient supply of teachers (*Lehrkraefte*) for a longer period of years, nevertheless the three candidates at that time still resident in Perry County, Brohm, Fuerbringer and Buenger, recognized it to be their duty not to slothfully and carelessly leave the founding of institutions for the training and education of faithful teachers and ministers to the future. The solicitude for the future of the children with respect to Church and school, had been the strongest motive for the emigration of the Saxon Lutherans to America. Inexpressibly pitiable as were the efforts required to make provision of daily bread for the poor body from day to day, the care for bread for the soul still remained the chief care and the chief task, for they firmly held to the word of the Lord: "Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall

we drink? Wherewithal shall we be clothed? Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:31, 33). With great joy the pastors at that date resident in Perry County, Loeber, Keyl and the younger Walther, entered upon the plan to at first establish a college, and promised their active support. Naturally, in view of the still present great lack of rooms in the settlement, which was just struggling into existence, the first great need (after the purchase of six acres of ground, arranged by Brohm, Fuerbringer, Buenger and Walther) was the erection of a little hut (*Huettlein*) for the projected institution. Several members of the congregations were indeed also found, who, severe as was their struggle for their own daily needs, nevertheless at once promised their aid toward the erection of the building, and faithfully, so far as they were able, kept what they had promised; still, the chief work had to be done by the beloved candidates themselves. There it was our Buenger, who outdid all others when it now came to felling trees, sawing and hewing logs, splitting fence rails, removing stumps, grubbing out brush and weeds, clearing the ground for its pur-

pose, and finally to put the prepared material together and the like. Buenger dug the still existing college well with his own hands alone. The little money, absolutely necessary for the purchase of those materials which the forest itself did not furnish, came from the congregation which remained in St. Louis, where the elder, O. H. Walther, had been called. After the log cabin finally stood and was dedicated, there was a joy, the heartiness of which only he can feel who has once shared and tasted it."

The translation is stiff, but Walther's flowing German, with its "dochs" and "zwars" and "dennochs," is not easy to render, unless you are willing to give his sense and ignore his syntax. Koestering's account is real gossipy. He supplies a few details, the most interesting of which is a rude woodcut showing a one-room log cabin beside a Saxon *Fachwerk* (timbered) dwelling. He also says that Otto Hermann Walther sent a poem he had written for the dedication, which he quotes in full.

On Madeline Island, in Lake Superior, off Ashland, Wisconsin, there is a log cabin chapel said to have been built by the Jesuit Father, Pierre Marquette. They have his statue in the capitol at Washington. This

chapel is completely enclosed within another building for its preservation. They have recently done the same thing with the log cabin college building, "near the Obrazo," in Perry County, Missouri, which suggests this question: "Which of the two log cabins has done most for this country?" For a Lutheran, acquainted with the teachings and work of his Church, there can be but one answer.

The "so-called" college (the English name still came a little hard) was opened in December with seven students, among them Fr. J. Biltz, J. A. F. W. Miller and Ch. H. Loeber, young men who afterwards became prominent in the Missouri Synod. Originally young women also were offered a higher education at this institution. The four who attended were taught by Pastor Loeber. Pressed by the supreme need of providing ministers for its congregations, the Missouri Synod has not made the same full provision for the education of women that it made for the education of men. The Synod was correctly inclined to leave that to the initiative of local congregations or congregational groups. But the precedent was established at the very first higher institution of learning, which while not a co-educational school, nevertheless attempted to make full pro-

vision for the higher education of women. This fact is an additional honor both to the institution and the men who called it into being.

Like all young things, the college "near the Obrazo" at first led a precarious existence. Of course, the members of the faculty received no salaries. Who was to pay them? It may be doubted that they always had enough to eat. Pastor Walther, after the death of his brother, in 1841, followed a call to Trinity Church, St. Louis. Candidate Buenger also came to Trinity in July, 1841, and took charge of its parish school, which wonderfully prospered under his efficient administration. That left Fuerbringer and Brohm in charge. They carefully watered and nursed the little plant for two years. Then Fuerbringer was called to Illinois. Brohm continued the work with the assistance of Pastor Loeber. After Brohm accepted a call to New York, Pastor Loeber, assisted by Pastor Keyl, kept the college alive. Finally, in 1843, when Pastor Loeber's failing health made it impossible for him to continue the work at the college while performing his ordinary pastoral duties, the St. Louis congregation, under leadership of its pastor, Walther, began a careful delibera-

tion of the college question. It was recognized that St. Louis was the proper location for the institution, but the time for its removal was not opportune. The Perry County people clung to their child, but consented to make it a jointly owned property of their and the St. Louis congregations. Candidate J. J. Goenner was called as teacher and rector of the institution, with the promise of a definite salary. A college society (*Gesellschaft fuer das College*) was organized, the parent and model of the present "Lutheran Educational Societies" of New York and Chicago, which have done such splendid work for the upbuilding of Concordia at Bronxville and the Teachers' Seminary at River Forest.

In 1849, two years after the organization of the Missouri Synod, the congregations owning the college offered to present it to the Synod. This, by the way, is the usual history of college development in the Missouri Synod. Established and fostered by local congregations, they are presented to the Synod after they have proved their worth. The offer of the St. Louis and Perry County congregations was gratefully accepted, and the college moved to St. Louis, where Trinity Church presented it with a city building site

of two acres, subscribed $2000 toward a building fund, and pledged the net proceeds of its cemetery and the recently published hymnal for its support. Trinity also permitted its beloved Pastor Walther to accept the call of the Synod as regular Professor of Theology and President of the institution, to take the place of Pastor Loeber, who died August 13, 1849, just ten years after the publication of the notice announcing the foundation of the institution "at the Settlement of the German Lutherans in Perry County, near the Obrazo," which was dated August 13, 1839. Walther's name again headed the faculty list, where it was to remain until his death. The congregation, however, stipulated that Walther was to remain its pastor. Another vicar was to be called, who, like Pastor Buenger, was to do all visiting and perform all purely pastoral duties. Walther, besides retaining the supervision and direction of all congregational affairs, and attending, as far as possible, all official meetings, was to preach thirteen times a year, including chief festival days—conditions which Walther gladly accepted. He correctly felt that a Professor of Theology, training young men for the holy ministry, ought to remain in direct and constant touch

with the ever old and ever new problems of practical church work.

He began his work as Professor and President of the college in January, 1850, giving his first lectures in his dwelling on Lombard Street, between Third and Fourth Streets. There were six students of theology and two students in the college or gymnasium. After the completion of the college building, in June of the same year, Professor Walther, on June 4, removed to it, for he was to live among his students. True to Leipzig traditions, he delivered a Latin oration at its dedication on June 11.

The fathers always speak of this college building as the south wing (*der Suedfluegel*), for they did the same thing our former Secretary of Agriculture did with the Department building at Washington, erected two wings, proposing to join them later with a central building. This "south wing" was not very much of a wing. It was rather an ordinary-sized brick dwelling, 42 x 36, with basement and two stories. In it they somehow found room for Walther and his family, another teacher or professor, the steward with his family, and the sixteen students, whose number soon increased. Where they put them all is impossible to say. At any rate, they put

them as close to Walther as they possibly could. They correctly felt that a Professor of Theology, above all other teachers, ought to be near his students, daily teaching and inspiring them, not only by precept, but above all, by example. That they were right is sufficiently proved by the calibre of the men who were trained, not only under Walther's eye, but in constant daily association with him. Under God's providence they made, or rather, he through them made, the Missouri Synod. As Doctor Jacobs so correctly says: "His life is so closely connected with that of the powerful Synod which he organized and which was the expression of his own spirit, that even the details of his private biography belong to the history of the Church." If the Synod is "the expression of Walther's own spirit," it is such because he founded, organized and developed its own system of Christian education, from the parish school up to the theological seminary or university proper. For it is apparent that one of the aims at the organization of the Synodical Conference, in 1872, with the provision that each of the constituent Synods was to establish and maintain a chair at St. Louis, and ultimately send all their theological students to that place for training, was the establish-

ment of a great central institution of learning, a great Lutheran University in the very heart of America. While not openly outspoken or discussed, this must have been in the minds of Walther and his co-laborers. The unfortunate predestination controversy of the eighties spoiled that plan and threw back the development of the Church for many years. But that is another story.

The gymnasium or college proper was separated from the seminary and removed to Fort Wayne, Ind., in 1861. Concordia, Fort Wayne, thus became the *mater* and model of all the other Concordias since established at strategic points in this country. The seminary remained at St. Louis. A new seminary building was dedicated in 1883, in the presence of 20,000 people. "The splendid edifice," Hochstetter says, "like the bride of a king, overlooked all its neighbors." Despite the erection of an addition, which has sadly marred the appearance of "the king's bride," the seminary building is again too small, for it is called upon to house 328 students of theology, the largest number enrolled at any one Protestant theological seminary in America. To this number we must add the 229 students of theology, enrolled at the so-called "Practical Seminary," an institu-

tion founded by Pfarrer Loehe, of Nuendettelsau, Bavaria, in Fort Wayne, in 1846, for the training of gifted young men as *Nothelfer,* to assist in the shepherding of the Lutheran multitudes pouring into this country. After various vicissitudes, this institution finally found a permanent home in the building of the former "Illinois State University," founded by Doctor Passavant in 1854, dedicated with an address by Abraham Lincoln and purchased through the Springfield congregation from the Pennsylvania Ministerium in 1874.

All of this out of a little one-room log cabin college, established by faith "at the Settlement of the German Lutherans in Perry County, near the Obrazo."

Chapter 12

Foundation-laying

The establishment of the Perry County gymnasium by Walther and his associates was a great event, because it led to great things. An even greater event was the debate held within its rude walls in April, 1841, because it led to even greater things. This debate, together with the spiritual trials which preceded and invited it, as Koestering truthfully remarks, "served to sweep out of this communion the Stephanistic leaven and to lay the foundation of pure, sincere truth upon which the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio and other States was afterwards built." In other words, this debate laid down and clearly established by an appeal to God's inspired word, as the source and fountain of all truth, certain fundamental truths and principles concerning the Church and its organization, which were afterwards incorporated into the Constitution of the Missouri Synod. As Walther wrote in the preface to his first great book, "The Voice of Our Church on the Question of Church and Office": "We have not mod-

eled the teaching of our Church according to our circumstances, but these according to the teaching of our Church."

But what did our Church teach? In the confusion which followed the deposing of Stephan, no one seemed to know. A more hopeless situation never confronted any body of men. If "hope deferred maketh the heart sick," utter absence of all hope or anything to ground hope on maketh sick without any prospect or without possibility of a cure. Such a condition means death of body and soul.

Walther was sick, sick unto death. Hochstetter talks about a malignant nervous gall fever and a persistent intermittent fever. Koestering speaks of "lucid intervals," which can only mean comparative freedom from periods of deep care and despondency. Walther was sick in soul as well as in body. And no wonder. Indeed, it is said of his brother, Otto Hermann, who died within two years after the coming of the Saxons to America, only thirty-one years old, that his deep and penitent remorse over his connection with and attachment to Stephan was an indirect cause of his untimely death. This feeling was doubtless shared by his brother, Carl Ferdinand. It was aggravated by the

condition of material poverty and hopeless spiritual confusion of the colony, a condition for which Walther's tender conscience would hardly fail to assume more than its full share of responsibility. But the greatest of these trials was the hopeless doctrinal uncertainty described in Chapter IX. Uncertainty and doubt with respect to the validity of his call and the lawfulness of his ministerial acts is a condition which no conscientious pastor can long endure. "The congregation lacked a firm doctrinal foundation," says Hochstetter, "consequently the hearts could not be established until they were established in the truth out of God's word." When he says "congregation," he includes the ministers. Although Walther had never accepted the hierarchical teachings of Stephan, it must, nevertheless, be said that he was not fully and firmly established in the truth afterwards so convincingly stated in his book, "Of the Church and the Office." This not only appears from the letter in which his brother, Otto Hermann, tells him that his excerpts on the call will avail him nothing if he does not first assure himself of his call in Christ unto His eternal kingdom of grace, but Walther repeatedly admits this himself, not only in private, but also in public. For in-

stance, when he speaks of the attitude he once assumed over against the "Public Protestation," published on November 23, 1839, by Doctor Carl Eduard Vehse, Heinrich Edward Fischer and Gustav Jaekel, Walther says: "It was principally this writing which gave us a powerful impulse to more and more recognize and endeavor to put away the remaining perversion. Without this writing—I now acknowledge it with lively conviction—we, perhaps, would still have gone many a false way, out of which we now have happily found ourselves. I confess this with the deeper shame, the more ungratefully I once conducted myself toward this precious gift of God. Unfaithfully as many, together with myself, acted toward the light given us, God, nevertheless, did not cease to make more and more rays of His truth penetrate our darkness, to tear us away from many things to which we in our perverseness tried to hold, to reveal to us great, dangerous evils and to more and more lead our hearts in the way of truth."

This Carl Eduard Vehse was a Doctor of Laws, who had come to America with the Saxon emigrants. After remaining here only ten months, he returned to Europe, where he published what Koestering, with some bias,

calls "a rather partisan history" of the Saxon emigration. This book contains the "Public Protestation against the false medieval, papistic and sectarian Stephanistic system of Church Government." It is a compilation of quotations, chiefly from Luther and the Confessions, as well as other recognized teachers of the Church, on the questions which agitated the Perry County and St. Louis congregations.

Addressed to the Pastors Loeber, Keyl, Buerger and the Walther brothers, it has a foreword to the congregations. Briefly stated, the "Protestation" is an attempt to define the true doctrine of Church government and the proper relation between minister and congregation. Presented by laymen, who point out that it was "the chief purpose of the whole emigration to make truly free here on this free soil the Evangelical Lutheran Church, which had, indeed, been oppressed, it," as Walther says, "gave them a powerful impulse to more and more recognize and endeavor to put away the remaining perversion." This "powerful impulse" powerfully impelled Walther, during his illness at the home of his brother-in-law, Pastor Keyl, to engross himself with a profound study of Luther along these lines, a study he

began as a candidate in his father's library and continued through his whole life. By God's grace he found that certainty without which no minister can ever hope "to be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and convince the gainsayers." He was thus equipped, when a public debate was arranged at the Altenburg log cabin college for a discussion of the question, "Are we still a Christian congregation?" to firmly establish these people in the truth of the divine word. And thus it can and must be truthfully said: "In this distress, when it was believed that they were no longer a Christian congregation, but a disorderly company of people (*Zusammengelaufener Haufe*), lost for time and eternity, it was one man who saved them, the above named, Ferdinand Walther."—*R. Hoffmann, "Die Missouri Synode in Nordamerika," Guetersloh, 1881.*

The Altenburg debate was held in April, 1841, two years after God, by the exposure of Stephan's sin, had deprived the Saxon emigrants of every human authority and support upon which they had once so confidently relied. Walther was opposed by Doctor Adolf Marbach, a learned and adroit jurist, who took the position that the colony, by separating itself from the Church of Germany,

had ceased to be a Christian congregation, and become a disorderly group of people, absolutely lacking all power and authority to perform any ecclesiastical function whatsoever. As the only proper solution of the difficulty, he urged a return to Europe, especially of those emigrants who still had natural duties to fulfill at home; without, however, being able to suggest any way by which their return might be accomplished.

Walther had made most careful written preparation for this debate, from which Koestering quotes at length. He points out two things which especially fill him with gravest apprehension. The first is the failure to properly distinguish between deceivers and deceived and a consequent tyrannical demand that innocent people confess themselves guilty of sins which they never committed. Remembering his own personal experience at his conversion, he asks: "Is not an especially high degree of knowledge of sin being made a condition of grace and salvation?" He insists: "A pennyweight of true poverty of spirit is worth more than a thousand hundredweight of mere head-knowledge of sin!" The other evil is the denial on the part of some of the presence among them not only of a Lutheran, but of

a Chrstian congregation, and the possibility of any lawful administration of the goods of the Church. Not content with keeping their doubts to themselves, the people that hold them stormily insist upon trying to impress them upon others as being irrefutable truths instead of mere uncertainties and doubts. Walther quotes Luther, who says of the enthusiasts of his day that Satan through them brought forth nothing but uncertainty and doubt, and then they, disparaging everybody who disagreed with them, called their doubts Scripture and God's word. "For it is sin and a tempting of God, whoever is uncertain and doubtful in divine things; and whoever teaches uncertain notions for divine truth denies just as well as he who openly speaks against the truth; for he speaks what he himself does not know and still would have it be the truth" (Luther).

After thus ruthlessly dissecting and laying bare existing evils, Walther proceeds to state the problem. "It is a question," he says, "of quieting of conscience, of the rejection of false teaching, seeking to insinuate itself under the guise of humility, of the firm holding of the true doctrine of the Church, Church power, office, call, fellowship, power of the word and the divine order.

It is not a question of any man's honor or justification, but of the honor of God." He embodied his teaching on these vital subjects in eight theses or sentences, which he successfully defended by an appeal to the Scriptures and the Confessions of the Church, supported and elucidated by the writings of Luther and other unquestioned authorities. Since they lay the foundation, not only for all of Walther's later writings on the subject of Church organization, but for the organization of the Missouri Synod itself, they are quoted in full:

I

The true Church, in the most real and most perfect sense, is the totality (*Gesamtheit*) of all true believers, who from the beginning to the end of the world have been called and sanctified by the Holy Spirit through the word out of all peoples and tongues. And since God alone knows these true believers (2 Tim. 2: 19), it is also called the invisible Church. No one belongs to this true Church who is not spiritually united with Christ, for it is the spiritual body of Jesus Christ.

II

The name of the true Church also belongs to all those visible companies of men with whom God's word is purely taught and the holy sacraments are administered according to the institution of Christ. True, in this Church there are godless, hypocrites and heretics, but they are not true members of the same, nor do they constitute the Church.

III

The name Church, and, in a certain sense, the name true Church, also belongs to those visible companies of men who have united under the confession of a falsified faith, and, therefore, have incurred the guilt of a partial departure from the truth; provided they possess so much of God's word and the holy Sacraments in purity that children of God may thereby be born. When such companies are called true Churches, it is not the intention to state that they are faithful, but only that they are real Churches, as opposed to all worldly organizations (*Gemeinschaften*).

IV

The name Church is not improperly applied to heterodox companies, but according to the manner of speech of the word of God itself. It is also not immaterial that this high name is allowed to such communions, for out of this follows:

1. That members also of such companies may be saved, for without the Church there is no salvation.

V

2. The outward separation of an heterodox company from an orthodox Church is not necessarily a separation from the universal Christian Church, nor a relapse into heathenism, and does not yet deprive that company of the name Church.

VI

3. Even heterodox companies have Church power; even among them the goods of the Church may be validly administered, the ministry established, the Sacraments validly administered, and the keys of the kingdom of heaven exercised.

VII

4. Even heterodox companies are not to be dissolved, but reformed.

VIII

The orthodox Church is chiefly to be judged by the common orthodox, public confession upon which its members recognize themselves to have been pledged and to which they confess.

Plainly the man is no compromising Church politician. He makes no attempt to unite divergent elements by ignoring real issues and urging mutual concessions, which never settle anything but only defer the day of final reckoning and inevitable division. Walther knows that there is no true unity but the unity in the one faith. He aims to unify before attempting to unite. He acts upon the word of his Lord: "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (Job 8:31, 32). Christian liberty and Christian unity through a knowledge of Christian truth, this was the principle and the goal of his every activity in the field of Church organization. It inspired the Altenburg theses, and their amplification, elucidation and application both in his own writings on this subject as well as the doctrinal discussions which are such an important feature at all sessions of the Synod organized under his leadership in 1847. Beginning with his book, "Die Stimme unserer Kirche in der

Frage von Kirche und Amt" ("The Voice of Our Church on the Question of Church and Office"), and continued in "Die Rechte Gestalt einer vom Staat unabhaenigigen Ortsgemeinde" ("The Correct Form of a Local Congregation Independent of the State"), the Altenburg theses "powerfully impelled" a discussion of the subject, "Die Evangelisch Lutherische Kirche, die wahre sichtbare Kirche auf Erden" (The Evangelical Lutheran Church, the true Church visible upon earth"), which was presented and discussed by Walther at the sessions of the general Church body at St. Louis in 1866. Not content with this, he presented and for thirteen years elaborated a subject at the sessions of the Western District of the Synod, which rings out like a pæan of victory. "Only through the doctrine of the Lutheran Church is God alone given all glory, an irrefutable proof that her doctrine is the alone true." He completed this magnificent work in 1881, as it were closing his life work, with the motto which had inspired his every thought and deed, *Soli Deo Gloria!* (To God alone be glory!) It all grew out of the Altenburg debate, the first effect of which was a "quieting of troubled consciences by the rejecting of error and establishing in the truth" of a

little group of Saxon immigrants in Perry County, Missouri. Verily "it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace"—the grace of God which leads His people to a knowledge of the truth.

Chapter 13

Congregational Organization

The truths so successfully defended and the principles laid down at the Altenburg debate, in April, 1841, were first applied under Walther's leadership in organizing and ordering the affairs of the St. Louis congregation. Composed of the emigrants who had remained in the city, where they found employment and a livelihood, and strengthened by accessions from Perry County and some of the "Berliners," who had come from New York, the congregation steadily grew in numbers, although it worshiped at most unfavorable hours in the basement of Christ Episcopal Church on Fifth Street, near the court-house. What was more important, the congregation, under the faithful, self-sacrificing ministry of Otto Hermann Walther, its first pastor, grew mightily in Christian knowledge. The tribulation of outward poverty and inward spiritual distress softened their hearts to receive the word.

Their poverty must have been extreme. They gave their pastor a salary of $15 per month and his house rent. When he mar-

ried Agnes E. Buenger, the sister of Ferdinand Walther's Leipzig student friend, Pastor J. F. Buenger, in November, 1839, the congregation undertook to collect some funds for a wedding present. Oppressed by a sense of their poverty, Otto Hermann Walther promptly requested them to desist, agreeing, lest he slight their love, to accept a most simple bedstead and a table. He had already ordered three chairs, he said, which would be quite sufficient. For them to do any more would be, not a token of love, but the imposition of a burdensome obligation. When he died, January 21, 1841, leaving his beloved Agnes and a baby son of three months, after a brief married life of only fourteen months, the congregation paid his funeral expenses, which amounted to $27.95½, and agreed to give his widow a pension of $5 per month. Pitiably little as it was, they at least cheerfully recognized their obligations and did what was in their power.

The spiritual trials which they were called upon to share with their Perry County brethren weighed even more heavily upon them than upon the congregations "near the Obrazo." These could at least suffer in relative loneliness. The suffering of the St. Louis congregation, however, was aggravated by

the unchristian agitations of false brethren and intensified by the gibes and jeers of unfeeling worldings, who called everybody who had had even the remotest connection with Stephan a "Stephanist." These insinuations and accusations were expressed not only in private, but through the German press, which in those days was even more antagonistic to the Church than it so often is to-day. Still, the congregation grew and prospered, both in numbers and the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. They were thinking of acquiring a church property of their own, when God called their beloved pastor into the eternal rest of His people. Pastor C. J. Otto Hanser, who wrote a history of this congregation at the celebration of its fiftieth anniversary, in 1889, speaks of him as having been "a highly gifted and richly blessed preacher, a chosen vessel of the Spirit and gifts of God; a burning and shining light in whose brightness so many souls, aye, a whole congregation, rejoiced with great thanks to God." "His death," says Hanser (he was but thirty-one years and four months old), "doubtless belongs to the darkest ways and leadings of God with this congregation and his Lutheran Church at this place."

The St. Louis congregation, on February

8, 1841, called Carl Ferdinand Walther to succeed his brother as its pastor, and sent one of its members, a M. Quast, to Perry County to place a formal written call into his hands and urge him, because of its great needs, to accept and come to St. Louis at once. Walther, who was still ill, was in the midst of his preparations for the Altenburg debate. In a beautiful letter he acknowledges the receipt of the call, and with perfect Christian frankness gives the congregation the reasons which make his immediate acceptance impossible. These, he says, are not alone scruples of conscience, whose ground lies in part within, in part without him, but also his bodily condition. He promises to do everything in his power to attain a clear knowledge of the divine will as soon as possible, and closes with a fervent prayer for divine guidance, commending the congregation to the grace and protection of God.

What these "scruples of conscience" were plainly appears from the minutes of a meeting of the St. Louis congregation, held April 26, 1841. Walther attended this meeting and informed the congregation of his readiness to accept its call, because God had graciously removed all doubts and hindrances which might have prevented his do-

ing so. "For (1) his health had been restored; (2) he, through a diligent study of the old teachers of our Church, had attained the conviction that when, on the part of the calling congregation, everything had been done according to the divine order, the person called ought by no means refuse to accept the call; (3) any mistake he may have made in connection with the emigration did not constitute such sins as would (1 Tim. 3:7; Titus 1:7) render him unworthy of the office; (4) he was now absolutely certain that the congregation could not be deprived of the glory of a Christian congregation, consequently it could not be denied the privileges of the same."

Here, then, is the first definite, tangible result of the Altenburg debate, "the quieting of conscience, the rejection of false teaching, seeking to insinuate itself under the guise of humility, the firm holding of the true doctrine of the Church, Church power, office, call, fellowship, power of the word, and the divine order,"—the establishment of a divinely-ordered relationship between pastor and congregation in the person of Walther and the St. Louis Church, which was to endure for nearly fifty years. Through God's gracious providence, the man who, by an ap-

peal to the Scriptures and the Confessions, had so convincingly re-established those truths, without a clear perception of which there can be no real working together on the part of pastor and flock for the glory of God and the upbuilding of His Church, was to put these truths into practical execution; thus making Trinity congregation of St. Louis a model, an inspiration and a blessing unto thousands. No wonder good old Pastor Otto Hanser took God's promise to Abraham, "I will bless thee and thou shalt be a blessing" (Gen. 12:2), for the motto of his history of this congregation. It would have been difficult, if not impossible, to find a better one.

Walther preached his inaugural sermon on Jubilate Sunday, 1841, to his congregation, which still worshiped in the basement of Christ Episcopal Church. We may assume his salary to have been the same as that paid to his brother, Otto Hermann, $15 per month, with the privilege of occupying a couple of rooms in the second story of a building on Poplar Street, rented by the congregation for parish school purposes. His health was not yet fully restored, and the congregation requested that he regularly preach one sermon on Sunday mornings, read

a sermon Sunday afternoons, and at once begin to instruct his catechumens. He was a few months over twenty-nine years of age when he became pastor of a congregation which under his leadership was to become the mother church of the Missouri Synod, and the fountain-head of all its wonderful activities in the field of Christian missions and Christian benevolence.

It would be too much to expect that all these various activities were immediately established and organized without hindrance or opposition. The spirit of Stephan still lived. The truth established at the Altenburg debate did not at once overcome all error and put an end to all controversy. The truth never does. It unites and separates, it gathers and excludes. It was so on first Pentecost day. Some said, "We do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God." These believed and were added to the infant Church. Others, mocking, said, "These men are full of new wine." These formed the opposition, the gainsayers.

Walther's gainsayer, and the leader of the opposition, was a certain Sproede, who had come to St. Louis with the "Berliners" from New York. This man, whose agitations had

caused Walther and the other Perry County ministers untold grief, followed him to St. Louis, where he managed to find a few like-minded adherents. These people called Walther a miserable pietist, a deceiver, and a wolf, who had no knowledge of true Lutheranism, which they claimed as their exclusive possession; accused him, the most modest of men, of hierarchical aims, insisted that the congregation depose him, questioned its right to exist as a congregation, urged its prompt dissolution, etc. They did to Walther exactly what Stanley, in his famous essay on "The Judaizers of the Apostolical Age," describes these most bitter enemies of the gospel as having done to St. Paul. "Every point in his authority which seemed open to question, every trait of his character which could by any possibility admit of a sinister interpretation," was turned against him. It must have been a galling experience for a man of Walther's character and breeding, who, moreover, had already endured so much for his faith's sake.

This distressing agitation lasted for two whole years, or until after Sproede's sudden death in 1843. It necessitated the holding of countless congregational meetings for the consideration of these absurd charges and

their judgment according to the truths and principles laid down in Walther's Altenburg theses, which, after all, are but a restatement and amplification of the truths stated in the Augsburg Confession. As a result, the congregation was wonderfully enriched and established in Christian knowledge. Like the "more noble" Bereans, "they searched the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so," and profited accordingly. Under guidance of their pastor, these Lutheran laymen, in their congregational assemblies, discussed and applied Lutheran doctrine. This not only saved the congregation from disruption, by uniting it in the knowledge and confession of the truth, but it led to the formulation of a constitution (*Gemeindeordnung*) and rules for the guidance of the elders (*Vorsteherordnung*) together with an almoners' fund (*Armenkassenordnung*), which were adopted and signed in the spring of 1843. Walther and his congregation spent two whole years on the consideration of this matter, trying every paragraph by the rule of the inspired word and the testimonies of the Church, as contained in the Confessions and the writings of the Lutheran fathers. Especial consideration was given to the appointment of lay-elders or deacons, an in-

stitution not generally known in the established Church of Germany. A summary of these discussions may be found in Walther's "Pastoral-theologie," published in 1872 (pages 355-375), a book, by the way, which should be issued in English translation.

The result was a constitution somewhat different in character than those accepted for their government by most Lutheran congregations of those days, which, as a rule, not only left everything to the determination of a so-called "Church Council," but did not even contain a confession of faith or state any qualifications for membership. At the completion of this work, Walther, inviting the subscription of the members, emphasized: "(1) The will of God that every congregation have its own constitution (*Ordnung*); (2) that God has given His children liberty to order all things according to their needs; (3) that we herein have the Church of all times as leader (*Vorgängerin*); (4) that a constitution (*Ordnung*) is especially necessary in this country, where the government does not concern itself with the Church." With the adoption of this "order" the St. Louis congregation laid the foundations for Church government in all congregations of the Missouri Synod, together with

the government of the Synod itself.

It selected its name a whole year before it adopted its constitution. It had enjoyed the generous hospitality of Christ Protestant Episcopal Church, worshiping in its basement for several years. There was no hall in the city which they might have rented. The school-room on Poplar Street was too small for the worshiping congregation. Still, when the vestry of Christ Church began to feel that they had done all that could be expected of them, they did try to find another place of worship. Failing in this, they again began to think of purchasing a lot and erecting their own church building. This was in January, 1841, about ten months after Ferdinand Walther had become their pastor. They purchased a lot of 50 x 60 feet on Lombard Street, between Third and Fourth Streets, for $1000, paying $600 cash, and agreeing to pay eight per cent and then ten per cent interest on the balance. During the discussion of their building plans the question of a Church name came up, and Walther expressed a wish worthy of consideration by any congregation under the necessity of selecting a name. He said. "(1) The name of the church ought not be the name of a man; (2) it ought to contain a confession;

(3) it ought not invite the mockery of the world." Accordingly they selected the name "Trinity" (*Dreieinigkeit-kirche*). And when they laid the foundations for their church building they placed a document describing their history into the corner-stone, which contained these words, written by Walther: "Know, O Reader, whoever thou mayest be, we for this reason have given our church the high and holy name of 'Trinity Church,' because we acknowledge no other God to be the true God, save the Triune, God Father, God Son, God Holy Ghost, as He has revealed Himself to us in His word. Know, O Reader, only for this purpose have we laid the foundation for this our church, that in it the pure word of God, according to the interpretation of the Apostolical, and after it of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, may be proclaimed to us and our posterity, and the holy sacraments, holy Baptism and holy Communion, may be administered, according to the institution of Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, by the called ministers of the Church." This noble, dignified statement sounds like an echo of the Altenburg debate. Let the truth proclaimed by Martin Luther once grip a man's heart and be burned into his soul by the fire of tribulation, and there

is no getting away from it.

The corner-stone was laid with a service in the basement of Christ Church, the usual place of worship. They did not think it wise to hold this service at the new building site, because of *"zu befuerchtender Stoerungen"* (to be feared disturbances). Are they hinting at rowdyism? Had they not yet lived down the Stephan disrepute? If this is the case, then the more honor to Christ Church, which opened its doors to these despised Saxon immigrants. They never forgot it. When they dedicated their second church, on Lafayette and Eighth Streets, and at their golden jubilee, they arranged special services to which they invited this congregation, asking its members to have part in their rejoicing and thanksgiving because of the divine blessings so abundantly poured out upon the once so despised Saxon immigrants.

The church building, a plain, simple structure, 50 x 55 feet, with a basement for their parish school, was built at a cost of $4120. It was dedicated on December 4, the second Sunday of Advent, 1842. The joy of the people was indescribable. They celebrated for two whole days. At the first, the Sunday morning dedication service, Walther preached. Unfortunately the manuscript of

this sermon was lost. Of course, the Holy Communion was administered at this service. At the Sunday afternoon service, there were two marriages and two baptisms. One of the children to be baptized was Walther's eldest daughter, now the widow of Pastor Stephanus Keyl, who was for years Lutheran immigrant missionary at the "Pilgerhaus," New York. Like Luther's "Lenchen," she received the name Magdalena. The Perry County pastors and congregations sent congratulations. On Monday, there were again a morning and afternoon service.

We may judge of how all this affected Walther by the sermon he preached on the third Sunday of Advent, when he, for the first time, was alone with his congregation after the dedication. The man's heart is almost bursting for joy. He begins like this: "And so it is indeed true! God has actually permitted us to accomplish what we a few years ago hardly dared hope, yea, hardly dared wish for! God has actually, in this our new fatherland, given us a place where He for us and our children will record His name, come to us and bless us. Oh, the exceeding good God!"

Yes, it was indeed true. "The sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest

for herself, where she may lay her young, even thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God." Walther says: "Many new, great hopes are awakened in my soul." They were to be realized, "exceeding abundantly above all that he asked or thought."

Chapter 14

The Parish School

One great trouble with this biography writing is the utter impossibility of keeping up a continued narrative. A man may be doing half a dozen different things at one time, founding a college, organizing a congregation, fostering a parish school, building a church, getting married, preparing to publish a hymnal, establishing a mission, and what not. But it is imposible to tell of more than one of these activities at one time. You no sooner spin out the thread of your narrative a few steps when you are compelled to drop it and pick some other of five or six waiting threads. And it is not always easy to decide which thread to pick up. Perhaps the continued narrative is not so important after all. The important thing is the painting of a good portrait. Now it makes absolutely no difference to a portrait painter with what part of the face he starts, whether it be the forehead or the tip of an ear, just so long as he keeps things in proportion. He is always coming back to the same point and starting his next brush or pencil stroke from

the place he began his first stroke. With this plausible excuse, let us go back again to the year 1839, when Otto Hermann Walther became pastor of the St. Louis congregation.

The Saxon emigrants had no sooner landed in St. Louis than they established a school. The Christian education and training of their children was one of the things which prompted their coming to America. Walther, in a footnote to his "Life of Buenger," says: "In these Saxon-Lutheran congregations it was the rule always to at once establish the office of teaching (*Schulamt*) with the office of preaching (*Predigtamt*). Within a few days after the arrival of the first division of the emigration company in St. Louis a school was founded here. If no teacher could be appointed, it was a self-evident thing, that the minister took over with his ministerial office the office of schoolmaster, and administered it according to ability." His having been a private tutor in Germany before his ordination usually gave him special qualifications for this work. If his being a graduate of Leipzig University had any bearing on the question at all, it might, perhaps, he held that this fact warranted the assumption that he had or should have some acquaintance with the teaching methods

which were to revolutionize the teaching methods of Germany, and, after the "educational revival," the methods of America as well. Accordingly, after Candidate Geyer, the first teacher of the St. Louis school, had accepted a call to the "Berliner" congregation in Perry County, Candidate Buenger, one of the founders of the Altenburg log cabin college, was called to succeed him. He accepted, and came to St. Louis in July, 1840. So when Ferdinand Walther came to St. Louis, to succeed his deceased brother in April, 1841, he found his most intimate Leipzig student friend, Candidatus Theologiae Joh. Fried. Buenger, there, laying foundations for a model parish school, at a salary of $10 per month and the privilege of sleeping in a corner of the rented school-room. As pastor of the congregation, Walther, of course, became superintendent of its school, responsible for its instructions and management. They had no plan of study, no schoolbooks, and no rules for its government. Pupils were there with an empty room in the rented building on Poplar Street. But they had Walther and Buenger, two men who had shared each other's bodily and spiritual tribulations ever since they first met at Leipzig, and who loved each other accordingly. Hav-

ing these two men, a room and a number of pupils, the congregation had reason to hope for some good educational foundation laying.

Walther gives the entire credit to his friend Buenger, although the two worked hand in hand for the upbuilding of the school. He says: "Under Buenger's direction the school soon came up. Since he endeavored to really teach the children something, making especial efforts to enable the beginners to follow the instructions with profit, the school came into great favor. Many parents who did not belong to the Lutheran congregation sent their children because they saw that they were there not only well instructed, but also accustomed to a fine behavior.

"At that time the German Radicals had also established a school in St. Louis. Its teacher was a German student who, although he had studied law at Leipzig, nevertheless did not know how to impart the most necessary elementaries to his pupils. He indulged himself in high speeches, talked much of scientific education, which he imparted to the children, for which he permitted himself to be paid $600 a year. His pupils were required to pay a tuition fee of $1 a month, for

which they learned exceedingly little. After this school had existed for two years, it went completely to pieces; most of the children from that time came to Buenger in the Lutheran school.

"This really had room for at most fifty children (the bed of the teacher and his other household goods took away a good part of the narrow space); but there were often eighty in attendance. Then they were compelled to find a place outside on the veranda, or on the staircase which led up to the dwelling of the pastor, on the steps of which they sat closely crowded side by side. So excellent had the reputation of the school become that even the "Evangelical" Pastor Wall sent his adopted child to it.

"The subjects of instruction in this school were: Bible History, the Catechism, Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, generally useful branches, and some English.

"The almost complete lack of suitable school-books at that time caused great need. The A-B-C book used by Buenger was printed in St. Louis (in the office of *Der Anzeiger des Westens* (at that date edited by Weber), and consisted at the most of twelve leaves, upon which "Brief German Language Lessons" were to be found as an

appendix. It is self-evident that the religious instructions were imparted according to Luther's Small Catechism, which in most cases those parents also purchased who did not belong to the 'Saxon congregation,' as it was even at that time generally called; for although these did not send their children to school for the sake of the religious instructions, they were, nevertheless, expected to conform to the rule according to which no one was excused from them. The songs which were to be practiced and learned, for the most part, had to be copied, as there were no song books. Somewhat later a friend in Germany sent a chest filled with song books, which were now introduced. They were printed in Frankfort on the Main, and bore the title, 'Kern Geistlicher Lieder.' The New Testament at first served as a reader. Afterwards Buenger, in his need, procured a selection of the best tracts for the purpose, which, being published by the American Tract Society, were to be had for a small price."

After describing Buenger's teaching methods and how he used his Wednesday afternoons to visit the city public schools to study their organization and discipline, adopting whatever commended itself to him for his

own school, Walther continues: "The second year the number of pupils increased to such an extent that a larger school-room had to be taken. It was also located on Poplar, between Third and Fourth Streets.

"The school-teaching candidate for the holy ministry received a salary of $15 per month, which was in part raised by the school fees (each child of the congregation paid five cents a week), in part by the Sunday offerings in the 'Klingelbeutel,' namely, the basins held at the church door. The 'strange' children were required to pay a monthly school fee of fifty cents. At first Buenger also received this; later he was required to deliver it into the congregational treasury, for his salary was raised to $25 per month."

After the dedication of Trinity Church, the school was removed to its roomy basement. Walther says: "Here the number of pupils increased to such an extent that there was soon an attendance of 150 to 160. With great joy and manifest success, Buenger labored among this respectable flock of Christ's lambs."

Certain things stand out in this account of the founding of Walther's parish school. First, the relative importance in the minds

of these people of the "three R's," as compared with Bible History and the Catechism. In enumerating the several branches taught in the school, Bible History and the Catechism come first; Reading, Writing and Arithmetic come second. In all of these parish schools the first hour of the day is invariably devoted to the teaching of religion. It could not well be otherwise, for in the mind of these people the attending children were not pupils merely, but "lambs of Christ," who gave command to His under-shepherds: "Feed my sheep," "Feed my lambs." That Christian Lutheran parents could be content to send their children to a school where, in the very nature of things, the teaching of religion was impossible, was simply inconceivable.

Again there is the relation of the pastor to the school. If the attendant children are "lambs of Christ," by holy baptism members of His flock, then Christ's under-shepherd has the selfsame duty toward them that he has toward every other member of the congregation committed to his charge. As he values his soul's salvation he dare not neglect his school.

On the other hand, there was no underestimation of purely secular learning. They

talk like this: "Surely God has intended our children in this country for something else than merely to become bearers of wood and drawers of water for the spirit of speculation. If we consider in what deplorable state civil affairs here find themselves, whereas God would certainly also have His secular government (*Weltregiment*) decently appointed and managed, and would punish the contrary with heavy judgments; and since it must surely be assumed that such people, as have from their youth been instructed in God's word and trained in the fear of God, also in civil government, will more conscientiously fill any position they may happen to occupy, we ought even for this reason prepare our children unto God that He may also use them for this purpose."

This was in 1857, when the Synod, only ten years old, was discussing the necessity of establishing a teachers' seminary. These people had educational ideals. They had been set by Walther and Buenger at the founding of the St. Louis parish school, where they not only taught religion and the "three R's," but "generally useful branches" (*gemeinnützige Kenntnisse*), and where the pupils were "accustomed to a fine behavior" (*eine feine Zucht*). The standards set by

them made for service; honest, God-fearing service in Church and state. No matter if they lacked a school building, school books, and almost everything in the way of furniture and apparatus. They had a true conception of education and its purpose. They had lofty educational ideas. They had a keen sense of educational responsibilities. If the Missouri Synod, with its wonderful system of parish schools, has these things, it got them from Walther and Buenger and their work for the school of the St. Louis mother congregation. If it refuses to consider any congregation, lacking its own school, properly organized and equipped, it does this because it was the rule always "to at once establish the office of teaching with the office of preaching." And if the ministers of the Missouri Synod stand ready to assume the duties of a schoolmaster in addition to their regular pastoral work, it is because, to quote Walther again, "if no teacher could be appointed, it was a self-evident thing that the minister took over with his ministerial office the office of schoolmaster and administered it according to ability." Finally, if the Missouri Synod to-day numbers the annual graduates of its theological and teachers' seminaries, not by tens or twenties, but by the

hundred, it owes them primarily to its parish schools, still so largely taught by these same self-sacrificing ministers.

The Synod, at its session of 1857, took steps toward establishing a seminary for the training of its school-teachers. It first called Pastor Ph. Fleischmann to take charge, and arranged special courses at the so-called "Practical Seminary," then at Fort Wayne, now at Springfield, Ill. In 1861 the teachers' seminary was separately organized and housed in a rented building. Pastor A. Selle was called as second professor. In 1863 the erection of a seminary building at Addison, Du Page County, Ill., was resolved upon, where a strong country congregation offered to present a site and considerable funds for the building, which was dedicated December 28, 1864. Pastor J. C. W. Lindemann was made director the same year, and the publication of an educational journal, the *Evangelisch-Lutherisches Schulblatt,* begun in September, 1865. Director Lindemann had received a splendid pedagogical training at a teachers' seminary in Hannover, Germany, before coming to America to study theology. With the experience of a successful pastorate in Cleveland, Ohio, in addition to his thorough equipment for the position, he took up

the work of organizing this Lutheran Teachers' Normal School, and carried it to successful completion before his death in 1879. The institution, which now has an enrollment of 233 students, was recently removed to River Forest, a suburb of Chicago, where a magnificent group of buildings has been erected under leadership of the Chicago Lutheran Educational Society. A similar institution was established at Seward, Neb., in 1894, which now has an enrollment of 137 students.

Meanwhile a quite complete series of German and English text-books has been prepared and published through the Synodical publishing house (Concordia-Verlag). These even include geographies, grammars, arithmetics, charts, a United States history and civil government, etc. Several of these text-books are of such excellence that they have found acceptance by the public school authorities of some of our larger cities.

At this moment the more effective organization and co-ordination of Synod's entire system of parish school or primary education is under discussion, the outcome of which will, doubtless, be the raising of educational standards, the correlation of these schools with the gymnasia or secondary schools, the establishment of high schools in our larger

cities, together with the establishment of institutions for the higher education of women and a further attempt to do what Buenger did when he spent his Wednesday afternoons studying the methods of the public schools of St. Louis.

All of which grew out of a little room in a rented building on "Poplar Street, between Third and Fourth Streets," St. Louis, where Carl Ferdinand Walther and Johann Friedrich Buenger first attempted to implicitly obey the command of our blessed Lord, who again and again said to His under-shepherds, "Feed my lambs."

Chapter 15

Home Missions

Next to the missionary command of our Lord with the magnificently impelling force of that one word, "Go," there is no more inspiring missionary text than the word of God spoken by the lips of Isaiah to the New Testament Church: "Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtain of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes; for thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left" (Isa. 54: 2, 3).

Trinity congregation had framed and adopted a constitution, selected its name and seal, built a church when it lacked even the purchase price of a desirable lot; organized its parish school, provided a home for it in the basement of the church building dedicated with such indescribable joy on the second Sunday of Advent, 1842. Surely, if a congregation ever had the right to stand still for a moment and catch its breath, it was Trinity. But neither Walther, its pastor, nor Buenger, its teacher, knew what it was to stand still. They, and the congregation

with them, immediately began to make plans "to break forth on the right hand and the left."

Buenger, despite the strenuous labor required for the organization and teaching of a mixed school, with an attendance of 160 children, took charge of a little country congregation on the Bonhomme Road, St. Louis County. In his biography of Buenger, Walther has a charming little description of his work: "Buenger visited the congregation every two weeks. These people brought a horse into town for him and tied it just before the school. Promptly after the close of instructions on Fridays, he swung himself into the saddle and trotted out to his congregation. In order to become better acquainted with the several families, he never unnecessarily lodged twice in one and the same house. Then, on Saturdays, he held school, and whatever he on this day had gone over with the children, he reviewed on Sunday at the catechization (*Christen-lehre*). It was always a great joy to the parents, when their children could give answer so correctly and cheerfully. Then, before Buenger dismissed the children, he assigned them their new lessons, which they diligently studied and always knew perfectly when he came again.

God so blessed his labors that the little congregation could build a small church, which was dedicated June 14, 1846."

So here was one stake set and "strengthened." Trinity congregation was "breaking forth." They promptly proceeded to set another. Walther says: "The congregation, which had now spread over the whole city, and desirous to obey its call to do mission work among the other Germans, now earnestly thought of founding a second school in a more northern section of the city. It was opened in December, 1844, 'in the St. Louis Garden' (on Wash. and Eighth Streets). Theodore E. Buenger, the younger brother of our candidate, after a successfully passed public examination, was appointed teacher at the new school, and was also given the office of precentor in the congregation, which had heretofore been filled by a congregation member, Mr. C. M. Grosse.

"The same year Friedrich Buenger was called to the ministry. In the first place the congregation in St. Louis appointed him as its assistant minister, with a monthly salary of $24, and the responsibility, with a second teacher, of instructing the higher class. . . .

"In 1847 a separate congregational district was established in the northern part of

St. Louis, which now called Friedrich Buenger as its regular pastor, necessitating his giving up the office of teaching, which had become so dear to him. In this 'Immanuel's District,' which was geographically separated from the 'Trinity District,' Buenger had sole charge of the pastoral work (*Seelsorge*); as regards the preaching he exchanged with the pastor of the other district in order to keep alive the consciousness with all members, that they now, as before, formed but one congregation.

"On February 27, 1848, the new Immanuel Church (the southeast corner of Eleventh Street and Franklin Avenue) was solemnly dedicated."

Here was another stake set and "strengthened." Having "broken forth on the right hand," Trinity promptly proceeded to "break forth on the left." The "place of her tent was being enlarged and the curtains of her habitations stretched forth."

The missionary methods employed by Walther and Buenger in the establishment of these two congregations are characteristic of the Missouri Synod. As a rule, new city congregations, especially in larger cities, like Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit and Milwaukee, were founded by the planting of a parish

school in some promising location, the inauguration of regular preaching services and the dismissal of at least enough members from the mother church or churches, to properly organize the new parish. The result was a solid and well-trained organization to assist the pastor in his missionary activities in the new field. While this method of work may be somewhat responsible for Missouri's underestimation in the past of the value of a large church extension fund, it also safeguarded that Synod against putting too much dependence upon a handsome church building with the further temptation to gather a crowd of poorly instructed people in an effort to promptly repay the funds furnished by the Board.

In the country, however, the methods followed by Buenger on the Bonhomme Road generally prevailed—regular and faithfully kept appointments, a visiting of all families, with real pastoral solicitude for their welfare and a most careful instruction and indoctrination of their children. This is the outstanding feature of both methods of work; the care of the Church's youth. If the Missouri Synod in its missionary activities has had a larger measure of success than the other Lutheran Church bodies of this coun-

try, it owes this not to a larger measure of opportunity but to a faithful following of the missionary methods employed by Walther and Buenger at the very outset. They established precedents which not only obtain to-day, but any departing from which will be fraught with danger—something we shall have to remember if we succeed in gathering a large extension fund, as is now contemplated.

Another most important feature of these missionary activities is alluded to when Walther says that the two pastors regularly exchanged pulpits "to keep alive the consciousness with all the members that they now, as before, formed but one congregation."

Although Buenger, now assistant pastor or vicar at Trinity, served the congregation on the Bonhomme Road, no attempt was ever made to treat that little congregation as a "chapel" annex of the city church. It was an independent parish, perfectly free to work out its own problems in its own way. There was no possibility of its interfering with the affairs of the city church; so why should the city church interfere with its affairs?

In the city, however, the situation was al-

together different. There the establishment of a new parish could not fail to affect every other existing parish. This fact, we take it, and not merely Walther's personal eminence, prompted these people to insist upon remaining one congregation. Walther discusses this matter with Pastor Ottomar Fuerbringer, in a letter dated February 17, 1847, and makes the significant remark: "*Man fürchtet Trennungen, wenn nicht ein Pastorat einen Einigungspunkt bildet*" ("Divisions are feared, if one pastorate does not form a point of union"). The history of the organization and development of the Church in more than one of our cities might be cited to prove that they were right. If not actually divided, the churches in other cities, as compared with St. Louis, were only too often weakened by their failure to work out some plan of city parish organization. Even with Walther's wonderful leadership, it may be questioned if St. Louis, had it organized independent parishes, instead of a *Gesammtgemeinde,* would ever have purchased a ten-acre cemetery in 1847, presented the newly-organized Synod with a building site and considerable funds to remove the college from Altenburg, founded the *Lutheraner,* published a Church hymnal, and, above all,

taken the lead in organizing the Missouri Synod. In view of which it may also be questioned whether we have worked out a practical and efficient plan for the organization of our city congregations, or whether to this day there is not only too often a woeful lack of real cohesion and united effort.

This is what they did in St. Louis: They called Candidate Buenger as assistant pastor of Trinity. He was ordained on the ninth Sunday after Trinity, 1844. His official title was "Vicar." Walther was "pastor *primarius,*" or *Oberpfarrer.* They provided (1) that Buenger was to preach at the afternoon services on Sundays and festivals, and alternately at the weekday services; (2) he was to assist at the administration of the holy communion; (3) he was to perform all official acts, baptisms, marriages, burials, etc., assigned to him by the pastor *primarius;* (4) in short, he was to assist him whenever he desired and needed his help.

Plainly, the responsibility for the administration of the congregation's affairs rested with one man. These people were not foolish enough to divide responsibility and invite friction by placing two men with equal responsibilities at the head of one congrega-

tion. They left that arrangement for the superior wisdom of a later generation.

After the building of Immanuel Church, Buenger was given charge of all pastoral work in that district. But the two districts formed one congregation. Walther was pastor; Buenger, vicar. The members of the northern district (Immanuel) had the right to seek and employ the pastoral advice of the *Oberpfarrer*. The treasury, all meetings, in short, everything pertaining to the administration of the congregation's affairs was managed as a unit. When Walther, in 1849, became professor of Concordia College and Seminary, Trinity called Pastor Fr. Wyneken as its vicar. Walther remained pastor *primarius*. In 1854 Synod elected Wyneken as its General President, relieving Walther of the onerous duties of this office. Wyneken remained vicar, and the congregation called Pastor G. Schaller as its third vicar. This arrangement continued until 1856, when a third district, Concordia (*Kreuz*), was organized. They then amended the constitution, making provision for each district to directly control its own property and manage its own school affairs. Walther remained *Oberpfarrer*. The pastors and elders constituted the *General*

Vorstand, which met every two months, the *Oberpfarrer* presiding. The *Generalgemeinde* also met every two months, received all new members, exercised church discipline after the district had performed the preliminary admonitions, nominated candidates for the ministerial office, leaving it to the respective districts to elect, while the *Gesammtgemeinde* extended the call. That one congregation should receive members under discipline in another congregation or receive the communicants of another congregation "upon profession of faith," was simply impossible. Walther, as *Oberpfarrer,* opened these meetings and welcomed the new members with an appropriate formal address. These prayers and addresses were collected and published in 1888 ("Ansprachen und Gebete," *Concordia Verlag*). He also led the discussions in these meetings of questions pertaining to practical church life, e.g., "On the duty of Christians to join a faithful local congregation," "The correct form of a congregation independent of the state," "On Communism and Socialism," "On Usury," "The Dance and the Theater." These discussions were of incalculable value, both for the St. Louis congregation and the Church at large, especially after their publi-

cation in permanent form. This *Gesammtgemeinde* also published many of Walther's sermons at its own expense, and the founding of Concordia Publishing House must, in large measure, be credited to its far-sighted business prudence. Moreover, if the congregations of St. Louis to-day own a splendid hospital in the city (founded in 1858), an orphanage at Des Peres, and a home for the aged and a Lutheran academy, the founding and continued support of which institutions call for sustained and concerted effort, they owe them to the unity of spirit which inspired this attempt at city parish organization.

The Concordia, or Cross District, called Pastor Theodore Brohm in 1858. The Zion District was organized in 1860, after Buenger had planted a school north of Immanuel in 1858. Candidate C. Boese became its first pastor. These four districts or parishes, with their fine churches and school buildings, maintained the above-described plan of organization until after Walther's death, in 1887. It was formally abandoned in 1889. Hanser says the last resolution adopted at their last "general meeting," provided for the erection of a monument to mark the grave of their beloved Walther. As foreseen and foretold by

him, this scheme of organization lasted only during his lifetime. The St. Louis congregations buried their *Gesammtgemeinde* with their *Oberpfarrer*.

Most of the men who discuss this plan of organization constantly use the adjectives "peculiar," "doubtful," "dangerous." Their arguments in explanation of these words are not convincing. Every form of organization has its dangers of possible abuse. That their present position of absolute independence (*ganz unabhaengige Gemeinden*) is an improvement upon what they had is yet to be demonstrated. Certainly this may be said: A satisfactory plan for the organizing into one effective piece of machinery of all the congregations in any one city has not yet been worked out by our Church in this country. It is a problem which must be solved if our present methods, so wasteful of ministerial time and energy, so foolish as regards the full use of expensive church properties, so miserably shortsighted in its efforts to solve the never-ending home mission problem, so pitiably weak in the organization and direction of its charities and benevolences, are not to continue to hamper our efforts to obey the inspiring injunction to "enlarge the place of our tent, stretch forth the curtain of our

habitation, lengthen our cords and strengthen our stakes." "The city," it is said, "is the problem of modern civilization." It is the problem of the Church, just as it was when Jonah preached at Nineveh, or Paul at Athens and Rome. When we come to seriously think of improving our organized efforts for the doing of our Lord's work in our cities, it will be well for us to look at the St. Louis *Gesammtgemeinde*. A plan of organization evolved by Walther, under which men like Buenger, Wyneken, Schaller and Brohm could work together, systematically, effectively and successfully, must have something to commend it, however *eigentümlich, bedenklich* and *gefaehrlich* it appeared to the generation that came after them.

Chapter 16

Marriage and Family Life

One cannot be too grateful to the collector and editor of Walther's letters, two volumes of which have just been published with the promise of others to follow. Judged merely as literature, their charm is indescribable. They are written with the same painstaking accuracy of expression, correctness in form, refined delicacy of taste; in a word, with that same inimitable style which marks his sermons. But they have another and a greater value; they reveal sides of his character perhaps unknown and unsuspected by any save his most intimate friends. Like Luther, he could joke and even politely tease a little. He writes to Wyneken and tells him: "I know what a hard case you are." He calls him "My dear old companion-in-arms." How delicately and politely he teases Ottesen on the aristocratic feelings of a Norwegian as compared with a "plump" German. Their greatest value, however, is this, they make possible the description with his own words of those most sacred of all earthly things, love, courtship, marriage and family life;

things which it otherwise would be impossible to discuss. Yet, for a complete picture of any man their discussion is indispensable. As he himself says: *"Hat doch der Theologe den Menschen zur Unterlage. Der Mensch hat auch seine Beduerfnisse, und nicht nur Leibes, Sondern auch und mehr noch Gemütsbeduerfnisse soll er nicht verkuemmern"* ("The theologian has the man for his basis. And the man has his needs, not only needs of the body but also and more needs of the heart"—Oh, that German word, *Gemüt!*—"if he is not to pine away"). Now, where is a man to satisfy his heart needs, his *Gemütsbeduerfnisse,* if not in his own home circle? And how can we ever know a man, if we know nothing of his heart needs and family life? It was this feeling that prompted the editor to give pre-eminence to a love-letter by placing it first in his collection. It was written to Miss Emilie Buenger, Perry County, Mo., under date of August 10, 1841, a little over three months after Walther came to St. Louis to succeed his deceased brother, Otto Hermann. Emilie Buenger was the sister of Agnes, the widow of Otto Hermann Walther, and of Walther's Jonathan, Joh. Fried. Buenger. The Buengers, like the Walthers, were the descendants

of an old family of ministers, which both on the father's and the mother's side went back to the days of the Reformation. The father, Pastor Jacob Friedrich Buenger, died before the Saxon emigration. The widowed mother was the daughter of her husband's predecessor, a Pastor Wilhelm Gottlieb Reiz, who died in 1808. Her grandfather was the author of a devotional book noted for its fervent piety. She came to America with her children in 1839, traveling over New York to St. Louis and Perry County. When Walther wrote this letter she seems to have been in St. Louis with her widowed daughter Agnes, who later became the wife of Pastor Ottomar Fuerbringer, a name which, like Sievers, is inseparably associated with the Franconian colonies of the Saginaw Valley, Mich. Emilie Buenger was with her sister Lydia and her brothers in Perry County, one of whom, Doctor Ernest Buenger, was a physician and the chief support of the family. Friedrich Buenger, candidate of theology, had come to St. Louis in July to take charge of the parish school. These details are interesting because they show that Walther, when selecting a helpmeet, looked to ministerial traditions rather than to worldly advantage, a fact which might, per-

haps, be emphasized with some profit by the professors teaching pastoral theology to the graduating classes at our seminaries. Guenther says of Emilie Buenger: "She was a faithful disciple of the Lord, who adorned her faith with quiet, devout life, and especially proved it through her love of God's word and through works of love and mercy. She was indeed and in truth a helpmeet to her husband for forty-four years.

A translation of his letter asking her hand which would preserve the fine sentiment of the original is impossible. He addresses it *"Teure, herzlich geliebte Emilie,"* and signs himself *"Ihr taeglicher Fuerbitter vor Gott."* He uses the formal *"Sie"* instead of the familiar, affectionate *"Du,"* through the whole letter, which to us, in these straightforward, prosaic days, seems almost an excess of politeness. But it is the complete Walther writing, even to the use of his favorite figure, antithesis, which he, in common with all strong writers of ancient and modern times, employs with such complete mastery and telling effect. He addresses his letter, "Dear, Sincerely Beloved Emilie!" Then he checks himself, as if he had said too much, and explains that he two years before, through her brother Fritz, had at least distantly indicated

a precious, high desire of his heart which she alone in this whole wide world could fulfill. He hints at the illness, which had so often filled his soul with grief because it made him dread that the dearest wish of his heart might never be granted him. But God has been gracious, and so he takes courage to lay this desire at the feet of his Lord. Her "Yes" or "No" will fully reveal God's will. He, therefore, asks her directly to become the companion of his life and to respond to the love for her which God has kindled in his heart. He has nothing to offer her. She knows his faults, his weaknesses and his poverty. But he can promise that she in him will find a faithful and loving husband. He has no one to speak for him. And so he has asked God Himself to be his Eliezer.

He then, because of the difficulty of communication, discusses the possible publication of bans and the date of their wedding. But he is too bold. He does this only because, even if she should refuse to accept his hand, he cannot deny himself the precious privilege of thinking of her, even though it be for only a few moments, as his dear, betrothed bride, presented to him of God. Then he closes with a prayer, and signs himself "Your daily intercessor with God."

It is a charming letter, full of sweet, wholesome sentiment, dictated by sincerest love, and filled with a high-minded piety. Emilie Buenger must have been a proud woman to receive such a letter from such a man. Her reply could not have been long delayed, although the waiting seemed long to him. On August 25 he writes her again: "My in Christ Jesus dearly beloved Bride! So, after a long, yearning wait, your precious reply is in my hands. God, as I with great joy of heart learn from it, has assured you of His gracious will that we together are to pass through this present unto the life to come. His holy name be praised for this forever and ever!"

Then he thinks of the home they are about to found. "Oh! let us plead in the name of Jesus that the Lord may give us grace to lay, on our wedding day, the first foundation-stone of a little Christian house church (Rom. 16:5). Oh! how I long that our home may be a faithful pattern of a truly Christian family, in which God may pass in and out and all the children of God be incited to praise the Father in heaven (Matt. 5:16)."

This is exactly what their home was, "a little house church," "a model of truly Chris-

tian family." He looked to her to make and keep it such. He writes: "But I, alas, hereunto feel so little strength. So much the more do I hope of you, dear Emilie." She must have been a strong-minded woman, this Emilie Buenger, suited to be the intellectual companion of a man who stood head and shoulders above his contemporaries. He suggests that she read the marriage sermons appended by that man of God, Doctor Luther, to his Epistle Postil. And then, with simple, childlike affection, he closes: "Now may God be with you, my beloved Bride. May He keep your love unto me, even as I, with God's help, shall abide therein unto death. Your Ferdinand."

They were married in the little church of the Saxon emigrants at Dresden, Perry County, on September 21, 1841. Pastor Keyl, his brother-in-law, performed the marriage ceremony. Then they returned to St. Louis to begin their simple housekeeping in the rooms above the school in the rented building on Poplar Street, between Third and Fourth Streets. Their furnishings were probably on a par with "the table, the simple bed and the three chairs" of his sainted brother. But with all its poverty, it was that blessed thing which Martin Luther and

his Katherine gave the Church, a Lutheran parsonage.

About four and a half years later, at a meeting held in St. Louis, preliminary to the organization of the Missouri Synod, the pastors Fuerbringer, Ernst, Sihler and Lochner were Walther's guests. Here is Lochner's description of Walther's home and their entertainment: "How modest, not to say poor, were our dear hosts' outward circumstances! Opposite the old Trinity Church, where the Saxon mills now stand, there was a small, two-story brick house. The second-floor front was occupied by Shoemaker Neumiller, a brother-in-law of Walther" (he had married Clementine Buenger, another sister of Walther's wife); "the second-floor rear, by the sainted 'Pastorin' Buenger, Walther's and not long afterwards my mother-in-law, who owned the house." (Lochner married Lydia Buenger, another sister.) "Walther lived on the lower floor, which he had rented. This lower part consisted of a living room, which at the same time was a bed-room for him, his wife and two children, a small adjoining summer kitchen and his study. The latter at the same time also served as the guest chamber. When the time to go to sleep came, the lounge was

opened to serve as a double bed for Doctor Sihler and Pastor Fuerbringer, and from under it a low frame" (it must have been a trundle-bed) "drawn forth as a reclining place for Pastor Ernst and myself. Mornings, during breakfast, the transformation of the improvised bed-room into a study took place."

Talk about "low living and high thinking!" Surely, it was to be found here. And if there is any question regarding the "high thinking," we have only to read the letters written to his wife by Walther from Germany on the occasion of his visit in 1860. He discusses the men he met, the sermons he heard, the religious conditions he found, as if he were talking to a fellow theologian. And then, like a good husband, he adds a postscript and tells her that he will bring the desired table linens.

God blessed the union of Ferdinand and Emilie Walther with six children. The eldest, Christiane Magdalene, one of the two infants baptized at the dedication of the first Trinity Church, was born November 22, 1842. She became the wife of Walther's nephew, the deceased Pastor Stephanus Keyl. His eldest son, Hermann Christoph, was born October 25, 1844, and died July 24,

1848. His death was caused by concussion of the brain, the result of an unfortunate fall. The twin boys, Constantin and Ferdinand Gerhard, were born February 23, 1847. Ferdinand Gerhard is pastor of a church at Brunswick, Missouri. The second daughter, Emma Julie, who was born July 27, 1849, became the wife of the deceased Pastor J. H. Niemann, of Cleveland, for many years President of the "Middle District" of the Missouri Synod. She entered into her rest before her husband. A fourth son, Christian Friedrich, who was born on June 29, 1851, died as an infant.

Walther was a lover of children. This not only appears from his relations with his Lenchen and Julchen and the twin sons, Ferdinand and Constantin, with whom we may group Johannes Walther, the son of his brother, Otto Hermann, but it is even more apparent from the affectionate joy he has in his grandchildren. In a letter to his son-in-law, Stephanus Keyl, he expresses the wish that they might so divide their possession that he could have them without depriving their parents of them. He tells him and Lenchen that he looks upon their children as if they were his own, and rejoices over them as over a sweet gift for his withered

age, by which it is again made to green and bloom. The joy he tasted at the birth of his twins, which he expresses in a letter, written to "Liddy" (at that time the wife of Pastor Lochner), is renewed every time the birth of a grandchild is announced. His letter of strengthening comfort to his daughter Lenchen, who was looking forward to the blessed privilege of Christian motherhood, is one of the most beautiful things in all epistolary literature. "Think," he says, "is it not a great thing that God should honor you to give life and existence to an immortal being, called unto everlasting life and already preciously redeemed through Christ? And when the dear child is happily born into the world, this is a greater event than one thinks. For the child is then there in order that it may know God for all eternity, to praise Him and to be blessed forever. If God were to present you with a million dollars, that would be a far inferior gift than such a little child." He says *"Kindlein."* Whenever he talks of children, he unconsciously uses affectionate diminutives and little pet names. The Gaelic, they say, has some thirty of them. It must be the most affectionate language in the world. Anglo-Saxon, with its "business as usual," has none. It is,

therefore, impossible to convey any adequate conception of the wealth of tenderness and affectionate love which quivers through his letters when he speaks of his grandchildren. They must be read in the original. Still, we must attempt just one translation.

On August 4, 1866, he writes to his son-in-law: "Little Emily parades around the whole day, with the exception of the noon hour, when she loves to rest from her governmental cares, sleeping by preference upon the carpet of the guest chamber, with a pillow under her head, in the shade of the great house with its ornamental trees, as if the entire jurisdiction of Concordia were given over to her administration. Her energy has already attained a certain fame in the child-world of the entire neighborhood. True, besides great amiableness, she has a considerable measure of that strength of character, which, without doing violence to language, one might also call self-will. But she has already noticed, after her brief stay in these regions, that there are still powers above her, which are able to use the acacias with their beautiful twigs for other than shade purposes. True, it has hitherto only been necessary to show her one of these twigs without any further use being made of it, but I have

been compelled to raise my bass voice out of the study window, when the little hoyden absolutely aimed to carry out her will as the highest law of the house. Nevertheless, she is more intimate with no one than with her grandpapa, for he allows her many innocent things which mother is not disinclined to refuse her. I have only to show myself and she runs to meet me, her face beaming with joy.

"Dear little Theodorchen is also the pet of all. He is such a sweet child that he cannot possibly save himself from kisses. Always friendly, he only laments when he, as it seems to me, suffers from teething. There is never a lack of arms and hands to carry him. Grandmother would like very much to teach him to eat, in order to spare his mother, but this seems to be the hardest of lessons for him. He appears to hold to the apostolical, 'I have fed you with milk, and not with meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able"; and I believe with right, for the basis of this spiritual sense certainly is the natural truth that little children should have mothers' milk."

His letters to the Keyls are full of such affectionate little chats, and we owe the family an immense debt of gratitude for having

permitted their publication. Written for the intimacy of the family circle, they permit us to look deep into the very heart of a man who could turn aside from the multitudinous duties resting upon him, to forget, for a moment, the oppressive cares which burdened his soul in the sweet and pure joys of Christian fatherhood. When death entered the Keyl home, taking two of the little ones, this man with the unbending will broke down and wept like our Luther at the deathbed of his Lenchen. He writes: "To-day, when I received the message, and saw 'Philadelphia,' my tears flowed. We all gave our tears free course." "My father-heart is also torn, and my hand writes while hot tears flow from my eyes." "It gives me inexpressible pain, that I cannot once again see that little cherub face and press a kiss upon its cold lips." And then he comforts his Magdalenchen, "*Meine Goldtochter,*" he calls her, together with her husband, as only a Christian father, tried in the fire of affliction, can comfort.

With all this wealth of love and affection, there is none of that weakness which so often blinds parents to the faults of their children. Even little Mili has a will of her own. He calls her "a little firecracker," and tells her

parents that she, before she left the home of the grandparents, had become much more tractable. In a letter, dated May 4, 1860, written on shipboard just before landing at Hamburg, he tells his wife that their daughter Lenchen ought no longer be permitted to participate in the games of the pupils. He writes to Johannes Walther, his nephew, and discusses his reading, warning him against the unwholesome tendencies of certain dramatists and novelists. He has a watchful eye upon his two sons, Ferdinand and Constantin; corrects and guides and advises. It may be doubted that he was fully satisfied with Constantin's choice of a profession. Ferdinand studied theology; Constantin became a miller. He says that he was content to have the one help people procure bread for the body while the other offered them the bread from heaven, provided they did it in the love of God and their neighbor. He jokingly speaks of seeing them before him, the one in a white, the other in a black coat. It will be an odd pair, he thinks. But in a letter to his Norwegian friend Ottesen, he says: "Ferdinand in these days goes to Brunswick, Mo., as pastor *designatus*. Constantin is now millering (*muellert jetzt*) in Collinsville, Ill., in Fick's congregation. The 'mil-

lering' does not seem to have greatly edified him."

What was it he had written to Emilie Buenger, when she had promised to become his wife? "Oh, how I long that our home may be a faithful pattern of a truly Christian family, in which God may pass in and out, and all the children of God be incited to praise the Father in heaven!" This prayer was answered. As in the home at Nazareth, there was here a sincere love of God's holy word, an abundance of tribulation and no lack of heavenly comfort. When his beloved Emilie died, on August 23, not quite two years before her husband, Walther wrote to his children in New York: "Her memory will be blessed as long as there will be people who knew her. Enemies she had none. My tears, indeed, flowed plentifully, for what I have lost with this my faithful helpmeet may not be put into words. But the more I think that she, next to God, lived and worked day and night only for me, the more I must refuse to begrudge it to her that she is now entered into her rest and that her works do follow her."

Then, with that inevitable regret which always grips a man's heart when he has lost the love of his youth, the helpmeet and the

companion of a lifetime, he goes on like this: "Oh, that I had only honored her more than I did in the press of the labors of my calling! That greatly humbles me; but her graciously looking upon me was to me a comforting absolution. Oh, how I rejoice soon to see her again!" He had not long to wait. Walther died May 7, 1887.

Chapter 17

The "Lutheraner"

The Missouri Synod biographers and historians, when describing the events that led up to the organization of that powerful Church body all tell how Pastor Friedrich Wyneken, when the first copy of *Der Lutheraner* fell into his hands, joyfully exclaimed: "Thank God, there are yet more Lutherans in America! This suggests several questions: What was *Der Lutheraner?* Who was Friedrich Wyneken? Why did he doubt that there were other Lutherans in America? What connection was there between his reading a little church paper and the founding of the Missouri Synod?

The *Lutheraner* was originally what we to-day call a "parish paper," published by Walther with the aid of Trinity congregation, St. Louis, to serve the needs of his own and the other Saxon congregations. Walther was its founder and editor, and for years it was popularly called *Walther's Lutheraner.* Hochstetter has a story, unauthenticated, as so often, according to which the publication of this paper was prompted by the following

circumstances: Walther was very ill during the summer of 1844. When it appeared that he might recover he prayed God to give him strength and means to write and publish four numbers of such a paper in which he might present the Lutheran Church in its true light. During this illness he was greatly troubled because the Lutherans were much calumniated, especially by the Baptists and Methodists. Be that as it may, it cannot be denied that these two denominations at that day felt it their duty to promptly "convert" and "Americanize" all German and Scandinavian immigrants. Accordingly, they simply denied the Church of the Reformation any right to exist in this country, and through their church papers (especially the *Christlicher Apologete,* edited by Doctor Nast, of Cincinnati) bitterly attacked its most precious teachings and usages. Guenther points out the essential fact when he says: "Now the time came when Walther's labors were to extend to wider, aye, to the widest circles." This could only be accomplished through an aggressive use of printers' ink and in God's wise providence this little parish paper was to become the means to that end.

Walther, speaking of the origin of this paper, first describes existing conditions, and

then goes on to say: "This finally ripened in us in association with several other Lutheran pastors, who had emigrated with us, a resolve to publish a little paper, which, under the frank, honest name, *Der Lutheraner,* was to serve our dear Church according to local needs, as God would thereto grant His grace. The prospects for the existence of such a paper were very, very dark. Our immigrant congregations were still exceedingly poor and under the necessity of bringing almost impossible offerings in order to enjoy the benefit of properly ordered and well-supplied Evangelical Lutheran congregations. That they alone should secure the existence of the paper could hardly be expected, and otherwise we had almost no acquaintance and connection with pastors and congregations. We dared send the paper only to two, both at present at the head of the so-called Saxon congregations as Synodical officers, W. and S. Our expectations, or, at least, our pretensions, did not extend any further than to carry about as many papers into wider circles as were necessary to present an unmistakable public testimony as to what the Lutheran Church and what its doctrine really is" (*Lutheraner,* Vol. 14). To which we must add: One has only to read the

Lutheran Observer of those days to be convinced that such "unmistakable public testimony" was not being presented by that paper, which, while not an official publication, nevertheless professed to speak for the vast majority of Lutherans in America. Another noteworthy circumstance in connection with the *Lutheraner,* was this: Walther, with true pastoral wisdom, discussed this, like all other undertakings, with his congregation and his ministerial brethren. This was no doubt one of his reasons for working out a *Vorlage,* or plan, describing the purpose, the norm and the character of the proposed publication. With true German thoroughness, he, under three heads, in sixteen sub-heads, elaborately sets forth just what this paper is to be. If we were to briefly summarize its purpose, we would quote points 2 and 3: "It is to prove that it (the Lutheran Church) is the true Church of Christ, not a sect." "It is to unite the divided members of the Lutheran Church, to recall those that are fallen away, and to prove that our Church has not become extinct, indeed, never can become extinct." Consequently "Every article must stand the test of the Holy Scriptures and the Symbols of the Evangelical Lutheran Church."

It is the same principle he is always reiterating: Unity through the truth unto union in the truth. Consequently, "The character of this paper is to be candid and positive; it shall show no false pliability, never sacrifice the smallest truth to love and to peace"; but "It shall breathe a spirit of love and forbearance; it shall deplore and instruct rather than thunder and lighten; it shall be firmly held that the Church invisible is everywhere present." Surely, there can be no quarrel with such a program, and if the *Lutheraner,* the official organ of the Missouri Synod, is today the most widely circulated Lutheran church paper in America, if not in the world, it owes its wonderful success to its faithful adherence to the principles laid down by Walther in this *Vorlage,* or prospectus, which was first presented to Trinity Church, St. Louis, in a meeting held June 3, 1844. The congregation unanimously approved the plan and pledged its support. In a meeting held on August 12, many of the members promised to subscribe for two copies each, and the congregation agreed to pay a balance of $4.68, needed to defray the cost of the first number, and to assume responsibility for any future deficits. And so on September 1, 1844, the first number appeared, with the

motto, "God's word and Luther's doctrine pure, shall to eternity endure," and the avowed purpose of "uniting the divided members of the Lutheran Church, to recall those that are fallen away, and to prove that our Church has not become extinct; indeed, never can become extinct"; in short, "to prove that it is the true Church of Christ, not a sect."

This was new talk in the Lutheran Church of America in the year of grace 1844. In 1843 a book was printed at No. 7 S. Liberty Street, Baltimore, Md., at "The Publication Rooms of the Evangelical Lutheran Church," with a "Recommendation," dated May 19, 1843, signed by more than two dozen of its most prominent ministers, who say that they believe it to contain "a correct statement of the general views of the Lutheran Church in the United States." The book was a reprint of "a series of numbers recently published in the *Lutheran Observer*, on the question, "Why are you a Lutheran?" by the Rev. B. Kurtz, D.D. And how does the author answer this all important question? Briefly stated, by arguing that I have the same right to be a Lutheran that any other man has to be a member of some other denomination. In other words, by making

the Lutheran Church a denomination among denominations, a sect among sects, and weakly pleading for tolerance of his views on the part of other and stronger denominations and sects. No wonder the Reformation Church in this country was losing its children by thousands upon thousands. Why should they remain faithful to a Church which had only "views" and no convictions, whose champions were apologizing for the manifest absurdity of her doctrines and substituting "Definite Platforms" for her Confessions of Faith? What was to hold them?

But here comes a man who gives another answer to this question: "Why are you a Lutheran?" He says: "Because the Lutheran Church is the true Church of Christ, and not a sect." That has a different ring. If I am convinced of that truth I cannot be anything else than a Lutheran. No wonder Wyneken exclaimed: "Thank God, there are yet more Lutherans in America!" A missionary and member of the Pennsylvania Ministerium, and thus of the General Synod, he wanted his own Church body to give answer to this question in the same unequivocal fashion. When it failed or refused to do so, he was glad to find somebody that did.

But who was Friedrich Konrad Dietrich

Wyneken, and what was his connection with Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther? Born May 13, 1810, in Hannover, Germany, he studied theology at Goettingen and Halle, and came to America in 1838, landing in Baltimore, where he made the acquaintance of Pastor Johann Haesbert, who served a congregation which had separated from Zion Church, once served by Doctor Daniel Kurtz. Through Haesbert, Wyneken received a commission from the Mission Board of the Pennsylvania Ministerium to gather the scattered German Protestants of Indiana into congregations. His energetic self-sacrificing labors in Ohio, Indiana and Michigan, form a magnificent chapter in the home mission history of our Church. Gifted with the North German talent for organization, he became the spiritual father of dozens of congregations. In 1841, with the permission of his congregation at Fort Wayne, Ind., which he had made his headquarters, he went to Germany to call for men to assist him to shepherd the Lutheran multitudes of the new fatherland. He organized the Missionary Society for North America at Dresden, Saxony, and succeeded in securing the enthusiastic interest of Pfarrer Loehe, of Neuendettelsau, Bavaria, for his work. Upon his

return to America, he again plunges into his work, keeping up his correspondence with the Church at home, urging and begging for help. In 1844 Pastor Haesbert left Baltimore to go to South America. Wyneken became his successor, and was installed March 9, 1845, by Daniel Kurtz. Two months later, in May, 1845, at a meeting of the General Synod at Philadelphia, Wyneken urged that one of two things be done to clear that Synod of the charge of having forsaken the doctrine of the Lutheran Church: Either submit the books and writings of the Doctors Kurtz and Schmucker to such recognized Lutheran theologians as the Doctors Rudelbach and Harless for examination; or to repudiate these books and the false doctrines they contained. The General Synod did neither, whereupon Wyneken went back to Baltimore and promptly withdrew to stand alone. He had already gone through similar experiences in "the Synod of the West," where, for lack of arguments, they smiled at his poor English. Nothing daunted, Wyneken simply told them: "You have heard so much poor stuff in good English that you can well stand hearing something good in poor English"; which was no doubt correct.

On his way to Baltimore Wyneken stopped at Pomeroy, Ohio, to meet a man who had attracted his attention by writing certain articles for the *Lutherische Kirchenzeitung,* published by Friedrich Schmidt, at Pittsburgh, Pa. It was Doctor W. Sihler, who, having attended a military school with Von Moltke, studied philosophy and philology, traveled and taught at Dresden, Saxony, came to America, at the instance of Pastor Loehe, to serve his Lord as a preacher of the gospel. He landed at New York in 1843, where he visited Pastor Demme. In Baltimore, where he was the guest of Pastor Haesbert, he made the acquaintance of Doctor B. Kurtz and Doctor John G. Morris. He traveled to Columbus, Ohio, where he visited the Theological Seminary and the Professors Schaefer and Winkler. Then, in December, 1843, he began to preach in a German mining settlement at Pomeroy. Pastor Adam Ernst and Pastor G. Buerger, the first of the men sent over by Loehe, landed in New York September, 26, 1842. Both were members of the Ohio Synod. Not wishing to stand alone, Sihler received ordination, after he had refused to permit himself to be licensed to preach, and became a member of this body. But not for long. When he, like

Wyneken, at Fort Wayne and Philadelphia, began to urge greater doctrinal and pastoral faithfulness upon the Synod, he soon found himself in conscience and duty bound to sever his connection with it, which he, with seven other ministers and one teacher, did through formal written protest, dated Cleveland, Ohio, September 18, 1845. Wyneken was present at this Cleveland meeting, and it was here that the plan of forming a Synodical organization, together with Walther and the Saxons, was first broached.

Sihler had come to Fort Wayne, July 15, 1845, where he took charge of Wyneken's former congregation, and the two students, Jaebker and Frincke, left as a legacy by that energetic missionary. The following year (1846) Loehe sent over eleven young men with a teacher, Candidate Carl August W. Roebbelin, and funds for the establishment of a missionary institute under direction of Doctor Sihler. On November 12, of the same year, three more young men came over, the Candidates Walter, Fick and Francke. This marks the beginning of the so-called "Practical Seminary," for the training of what Loehe called *"Nothelfer,"* "Helpers in Need." In a letter to Pastor Brunn, dated March 2, 1861, Walther says of the men

trained at this school: "Our so-called practically trained preachers are the best element of our Ministerium. They not infrequently, in preaching, in the care of souls, and in the government of congregations, surpass those equipped with learned sciences."

Meanwhile an entire missionary congregation had come over under the leadership of the pastors August Craemer and Friedrich Lochner, to establish a colony on the Chippewa reservations of the Saginaw Valley, Mich., and teach the Lutheran doctrine of justification by faith to these poor heathen. Pastor Hattstaedt, of Monroe, welcomed them, and they founded a settlement on the Cass River, which they named Frankenmuth, after their Bavarian home. They tell an interesting story of these Franconian colonies. They called the first settlement "Frankenmuth," for it took courage to cross the ocean and settle in the backwoods swamps of Michigan. In their privations and struggles they needed comfort, so they called the second settlement "Frankentrost." Then Loehe sent more people and help, so they founded "Frankenhilf." Then all went well, and they called the next settlement "Frankenlust," which means "the joy of the Franks." There is a fifth settlement, southwest of

"Frankenlust," which they call "Amelith." Just why nobody knows, and to-day its inhabitants are jokingly called "*Die Amalekiter*" ("the Amalekites").

The pastors of these missionary congregations joined the Michigan Synod. Their instructions forbade their serving "mixed congregations" (Lutheran and Reformed), and they had been pledged on the Symbols of the Lutheran Church. Consequently their stay in the Michigan Synod was brief, and on June 20, 1846, the four pastors, Craemer, Lochner, Hattstaedt and Trautmann, formally severed their relations with that body. Loehe had also instructed the men he trained and sent over to "seek contact with the faithful emigrant Saxon pastors and their congregations, who had been freed from Stephanism." The *Lutheraner,* which they circulated in their congregations, was the best of all means for the carrying out of these instructions.

Besides these Franks in Michigan, the Plattdeutch in Indiana and Ohio, the Hessians in Baltimore, and the Berliners in New York City, there was another group of Lutherans in Western New York and Wisconsin, to whom Walther and the Saxons might look, not only for subscribers to their

Lutheraner, but for a cordial welcome of all efforts looking toward the establishment of closest fraternal relations. They had many things in common. Both had manfully contended for the truth against unbelieving Church authorities at home. These Prussian Lutherans had even endured direct persecution. Their leader, Pastor Andreas Grabau, had been twice imprisoned for resisting the establishment of the "Prussian Union," with its non-committal "Agende." Both had emigrated to America to preserve the faith once delivered to the saints for themselves and their posterity, the possession of which had been guaranteed these Prussians by their old Bugenhagen "Kirchenordnung."

Grabau left Germany with one thousand souls eight months after the Saxons. He was followed by the Pastors G. A. Kindermann, L. Krause and H. von Rohr, with other emigrants. They founded strong settlements in and near Buffalo, N. Y., and in Wisconsin. They largely outnumbered the Saxons, and Hochstetter, himself a member of the Synod they organized in 1845, very correctly says that, in the judgment of man, a union between these Prussians and the Missouri Saxons would have been of in-

calculable blessing to the Church at large.

But it was not to be. Instead, an unfortunate doctrinal controversy sprang up, which harassed pastors and congregations for twenty-five years. Certain occurrences, chiefly caused by the lack of ministers among these Prussian Lutherans, prompted Pastor Grabau, in 1840, to write a "pastoral letter" ("Hirtenbrief") to these congregations. He sent a copy to the Saxons, requesting a *Gutachten*, or theological opinion. These found in Grabau's "Hirtenbrief" doctrines and principles emphasizing the self-same hierarchical tendencies which "Bishop" Stephan had so effectively used to tyrannize his misguided followers. The Saxons did not immediately reply. How could they? They had troubles of their own. The Altenburg debate was not held until April, 1841. Finally, when action could not longer be delayed, for Grabau proposed the joint founding of a theological seminary, and through Pastor Krause requested a formal statement of their position by the Saxons, Pastor Gotthold Loeber, who, as the eldest of the Missouri pastors, had had the matter in hand, wrote a considerate, carefully worded, yet thorough reply, to Pastor Grabau, under date of July 3, 1843. This matter had

caused Walther and his associates much concern. It was to cause them more in the future. Walther later said: "Our controversy with Buffalo is a cross which would again and again almost crush us to the ground." (Letter to Brunn, 1861.) For the moment the gist of what they said in their "Gutachten" of the "Hirtenbrief," was this: "It would seem to us on the one hand, with respect to the so much emphasized old *Kirchenordnungen,* the essential and the unessential, the divine and the human, have been confused, and therewith Christian liberty curtailed; on the other hand, however, more ascribed to the ministerial office than belongs to it, and therewith the spiritual priesthood of the congregations forced into the background." For people who had just passed through their experiences, this was more than mild. Grabau did not think so. He promptly accused the "Missourians" (they owe this name to him) of "errors" and "a lax, unchurchly spirit." The fight was on, and it was to be fought with increasing bitterness to the end. Walther sums up the result like this: "First we here had to be led by our own errors to the verge of temporal and spiritual ruin, in order that, saved by God's interference without our doing, we then, that

we may say so, as burnt children might the more immovably protest against these same errors appearing elsewhere" (*Lutheraner,* Vol. 14).

Now, let us sum up the situation as it appeared in 1844, when *Walther's Lutheraner* was issued "to unite the divided members of the Church, to recall those that are fallen away, and to prove that our Church has not become extinct; indeed, never can become extinct."

Graebner in his "History of the Lutheran Church in America" (what a pity he did not live to complete his work!), speaking of the year 1821, sums it up like this: "Thus there was in America an Evangelical Lutheran General Synod, which was neither Evangelical Lutheran nor a General Synod; beside it a considerable number of un-Lutheran Lutherans, and only a few pastors and congregations with whom a real, even if, so far as a knowledge of Lutheran truth is concerned, a weak Lutheranism struggled for an existence." A rather sweeping characterization, 'tis true; but it may, without any lack of charity or veracity, be applied to September 1, 1844, the date of the first issue of *Walther's Lutheraner,* as it was to March, 1821, with which date Graebner closes the first volume of his

work. With this difference, there were some few people crying, "The sword of the Lord and Gideon!" And Gideon's name was Walther.

Chapter 18

Synodical Organization

A strong man always surrounds himself with strong men. A weak man, who can neither brook criticism nor contradiction, usually gathers around himself "me too" weaklings, who stand ready to applaud all of his sayings and doings. Invariably this is the source of his undoing.

The men who answered the clarion call of *Walther's Lutheraner,* Wyneken, Sihler, Ernst, Buerger, Lochner and Craemer, were anything but "me too" weaklings. Their protests and withdrawals from the several Church bodies which refused to receive their testimony, amply proves that. If further proof were needed, it might be found in their voluminous correspondence with Walther preliminary to the organization of the Missouri Synod. Walther, in a letter to Brohm, dated March 8, 1846, speaks of his correspondence. He says: From time to time I must write to Keyl, Loeber, Goenner, Wege, Geyer, Schieferdecker, Fuerbringer, Sihler, Wyneken, Ernst, and several other pastors in Indiana and Ohio, less known to

you, often on the most important matters." These "most important matters" were questions concerning the framing of a constitution for the new Synod. That Walther's views were not simply accepted without argument or debate, appears from the letters he wrote in reply to questions addressed to him by Sihler and Ernst. The letter to Sihler, dated January 2, 1845, is a most voluminous document, answering with full detail no less than eleven direct questions. His letter to Ernst, dated August 21, 1845, just a month before the Cleveland meeting, where the organization of a new Synod was first publicly discussed, it is not quite so lengthy, but just as full and explicit. In this letter Walther says: "Let us also for the future not be mistrustful of the Lord our God, when He at times lets us, who are still so few, be told, 'The people that are with thee are too many.' Enough that we have the trumpet of the gospel in our hands and the lamp of faith in the empty pitchers of our hearts. See Judges 7." Plainly, these men were not minded to attach too much importance to mere numbers. They knew that in His kingdom God does not merely count, but weighs. And the name of His balance is faithfulness, even as He says: "Moreover

it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful" (1 Cor. 4:2).

Walther, it seems, was not present at the Cleveland meeting of 1845. A second meeting was arranged for May, 1846, at St. Louis, where the Pastors Sihler, Ernst and Lochner met in conference with the Pastors Walther, Loeber, Keyl, Gruber, Schieferdecker and Fuerbringer, to discuss the draft of a constitution, which had been prepared by Walther and presented to Trinity congregation for its consideration on May 11. The above-named pastors devoted an entire week to its discussion, which ended by their signing it, arranging to have copies prepared for submission to men who could not be present, and agreeing to meet again at Fort Wayne in July of the same year. Trinity congregation devoted ten meetings to its consideration, finally expressing its approval in a meeting held February 22, 1847, with the important provision that a paragraph be added declaring the Synod to be only an advisory body, the resolutions of which were to be ineffective until approved by the congregations. Walther and Trinity Church put the "Initiative and Referendum" into the constitution of the Missouri Synod.

This was Sihler's first meeting with

Walther and the other Saxon pastors. His impression of Walther is interesting. In his autobiography he writes: "Walther undeniably made the most weighty impression upon us; at that time not yet thirty-five, but in the expression of his face strangely aged, probably by the many and heavy conflicts he had to undergo in the congregation after Stephan's exposure. But his thoughts and words were full of spirit and life. . . . In our conferences it was chiefly he who was the quickening and formative principle in the drafting of the main features for a faithful, i.e., Lutheran union of congregations or Synod. He herein first revealed his remarkable talent for organization, of which I possess so little." Lochner, Loehe's *talentvoller Juengling* (talented youth), speaks in a similar vein: "What an altogether different personality there appeared to us, since we had indeed imagined him as a spiritual but still as a more comfortable appearing man. And with what love, with what joy and friendliness he received us strangers, and how considerately he treated us during the following days. Soon he had won our complete confidence, our complete love."

Lochner and Sihler also attended an extra meeting of the St. Louis congregation,

where the draft of the Synodical constitution was discussed. To the almost indignant astonishment of the two visitors Walther encountered no little opposition on the part of the congregation. The people had the bugaboo of a German Consistorium before their eyes, and feared to lose congregational rights which had cost them so dear. With infinite patience Walther showed his people that a properly constituted Synodical organization, far from depriving, rather secured to the congregations forming it the possession of the rights indicated by the words, "Tell it unto the Church" ("*Gemeinde,* congregation") (Matt. 18:17).

The visiting ministers, Sihler says, were invited to preach in token of the unity of faith and doctrine. It was an application of the ancient rule of the Church spoken of by Bingham in his "Antiquities," according to which a visiting clergyman, unless he be an errorist or unable to give proof of his standing, must be invited to take some part of the service, if only to read the gospel or give the blessing to the people. These men had brought Church traditions, customs and manners with them; and, like all well-bred persons, they almost unconsciously acted upon them. Lochner's sermon, so Sihler

says, was somewhat of a trial sermon, not for a congregation but for a wife. He had asked for the hand of Lydia Buenger, Walther's sister-in-law. Lochner was not only a "talented," but also a "most lovable youth," yet she, although sure of the consent of her mother, was not ready to say "Yes" before she had heard him preach, assured herself of his orthodoxy and became somewhat acquainted with him. Not only these men but these women also had brought Church traditions with them. Sihler depreciates his own and praises Lochner's sermon. He and Lydia married in June, and so Lochner not only took a Synodical constitution but a bride home to Toledo with him, where Walther visited the happy young couple after the July Fort Wayne conference. Perhaps inspired by Lochner's example, and under the necessity of entertaining this conference, Sihler, with the advice and assistance of his friend, Pastor Ernst, also took a wife with him to Fort Wayne from her home at Nuendettelsau, Union County, Ohio. She was considerably younger than Sihler, who naively says that Boaz called Ruth, the Moabitess, his daughter before she became his wife, and, according to the flesh, an ancestress of our Lord. His ac-

count of his courtship and marriage is worth reading.

The meeting for a further consideration of the draft of the constitution, which had been signed on May 20, at St. Louis, by Walther, Loeber, Gruber, Keyl, Fuerbringer, Schieferdecker, Ernst, Sihler and Buenger, was held at Fort Wayne. There were sixteen ministers present, despite the difficulty and expense of travel in those pioneer days. Thus the trip from St. Louis to Fort Wayne cost $50, and consumed four days for each way. Nevertheless, Walther, Loeber, Keyl and Brohm, came from St. Louis with a lay delegate, a Mr. Barthells, traveling via the Ohio River to Cincinnati, and then by canal to Fort Wayne. The Michigan men, Craemer, Hattstaedt, and several members of their congregations, traveled by lake boat to Toledo, and then to the place of meeting via the Wabash Canal. They met Walther and Loeber at the Cincinnati Junction, seventy miles from Toledo. Lochner repeats what Loeber told him of the meeting. As the Toledo canal boat approached the landing, Walther pointed out several men, attired in dignified black, with their long pipes (undoubtedly Weichsel stem and porcelain bowl, such as German students

carry to-day), standing upon the deck. They were Craemer, the Indian missionary and pastor of Frankenmuth, with several of his companion Franks. Craemer describes the first meeting like this: "It did not take long, when a slender man, with a prominent nose and fiery eyes, stepped out of the door of the little inn, followed by a mild looking tall man and a young student, who at once came aboard our boat. Of course, the former was Walther, the other the venerable Pastor Loeber and his son. The joy of the happy meeting was great on both sides, and soon, while we were riding along the canal easily and undisturbed, all were engaged in eager conversation. Thus I met Walther. It meant much to me to personally and nearer learn to know the man, whom I, by his *Lutheraner,* had already recognized as a pillar of real Biblical Lutheran truth. On the other hand, Walther also wished to know what kind of man it was whom Loeber had sent over to order the colonization and mission work, and to be the leader of his pupils. Soon we were deep in an earnest discussion of doctrine in all points, which lasted for the whole long trip."

Walther had again found a real man, fit to sit in council with men of the Wyneken,

Fuerbringer, Sihler type. Of course, recognition and appreciation was immediate and mutual. It was a memorable meeting, for these two men were to spend their lives at the head of the two Missouri schools of the prophets; Walther at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and Craemer at Concordia Seminary, Springfield. If the men they trained for the service of the Church, think, speak, preach and act as one man, it is because of the perfect unanimity of these their teachers "in all points of doctrine." Both of them, by the way, had "a prominent nose and fiery eyes," together with an indomitable will, uncompromising convictions, an immense capacity for work and an unflagging zeal for the house of the Lord, which never forsook them while breath remained in their poor, worn out bodies.

Lochner, Buerger, Selle, Ernst, Knape, Jaekber and Husmann were also present at this Fort Wayne conference. Besides the sixteen ministers in attendance, six others, unable to be present, sent their written approval of the constitution. Sihler sums up the proceedings like this: "Of course, here, as in St. Louis, the Saxon brethren, especially Walther, had to fatten the sprouts (*den Kohl fett machen*), for we Easterners were

pretty much novices for this ticklish and difficult work. Still, we all had fresh courage and good confidence, and at the end resolved to meet at Chicago in the spring of 1847, with delegates from the congregations to form an orthodox little Synod (*ein rechtgläubiges Synödlein*)." In passing, let us note that the Pastors Loeber and Walther preached in Fort Wayne during this conference week, again in token of unity of faith and doctrine. Although not a theologian born, Sihler knew Church traditions, customs and manners when he saw them.

Jubilate Sunday, May 25, 1847, was the day set for the pastors and lay delegates to meet for the organizing of the new *synödlein*. The place of meeting was Chicago, Ill., at that time a town of 20,000 inhabitants. It had no railroad connection with Fort Wayne, and so Sihler and his "Easterners" traveled 180 miles on horseback to reach the place of meeting. Craemer and his delegate came by boat. Navigation had just opened; the lakes were still full of floating ice, and so they were delayed. Wyneken, for some reason, was not present. The Baltimore congregation joined at the second meeting in 1848. The Saxons, Walther, Loeber and Fuerbringer, were the first to come; the two

latter, however, without lay delegates. Schieferdecker and Keyl, who had signed the first draft of constitution at the St. Louis meeting, May, 1846, were also absent. Schieferdecker had attempted to read the constitution to his congregation, but, as Walther tells Lochner, "the greatest rudeness was offered by the congregation, and the members almost came to blows with each other." It took ten meetings, with Walther leading the discussions, to convince Trinity congregation, St. Louis, of the benefits of Synodical organization. With some congregations it took more than ten times ten. They simply could not understand that a federation of congregations is not necessarily a federation of ministers. Still, there were twelve congregations properly represented at Chicago and ready to form the new organization. The host at the Chicago meeting was Pastor Selle and his congregation.

At the Sunday service Pastor Loeber preached on the gospel for the day, John 16: 16-23. The name of the day, the invitation of the Introit, the promise of the Gospel, all were encouragingly prophetic. The Holy Communion was administered in connection with this service. Pastor Sihler preached at

the afternoon service on Acts 2:42. In the evening the pastors gathered at the parsonage of Pastor Selle, and talked over plans for the opening session on Monday morning. Finally, on May 26, 1847, twelve congregations, each represented by a pastor and a lay delegate, with ten other pastors and two candidates of theology, formally adopted and signed the constitution, elected temporary officers, and settled down to work. And work they did. The Secretary writes: "During the meeting of Synod ten temporary committees were appointed, which, in the main, were concerned with very important and difficult matters; one theological opinion was given; three instructions and six other writings prepared; colloquiums held four times; two ministers received ecclesiastical ordination, and there was preaching seven times.

"A total of eighteen public Synodical meetings were held, in the last of which the officers and standing committees for the ensuing three-year term were elected, and finally the visitor commissioned by the Synod solemnly sent forth."

This "visitor" was a traveling missionary sent forth to look up the scattered Lutherans of Northern Illinois and Southern Wisconsin. The President of the new Synod was

the man primarily responsible not only for its organization, but for the form which that organization took. The truths defended and the principles laid down by Walther at the Altenburg Debate, in April, 1841, and first applied in organizing and ordering the affairs of the St. Louis congregation, were here again, under his leadership, applied to the organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio and other States. Walther, and no other man, was the founder of the Missouri Synod. The genesis of its constitution must be sought in the Altenburg Theses. The Synod itself recognized this when, in 1850, it resolved to publish Walther's book, "The Voice of our Church on the Question of Church and Office," as "a testimony of our faith for defence against the attacks of P. Grabau, in Buffalo, N. Y."

It is one thing to design a machine; it is quite another to make it perform its functions. Walther, the first President, also did this other and more difficult thing—he guided the machine constructed at Chicago until it worked smoothly and efficiently, performing the functions for which it was designed. As stated in the constitution, these were: (1) "The preservation and cultivation of the unity of the pure Confession and the com-

mon warding off of separatistic and sectarian confusion," and (2) "the protection and guarding of the rights and duties of pastors and congregations." Accordingly the President was given elaborate and detailed instructions for the administration of his office. Not the least important duty assigned to him was the regular visiting of all its pastors, congregations and institutions. He was to be an "overseer" in every Scriptural sense of the word. And there was plenty for him to "oversee" for this Synod, so small in numbers, started out with a marvelously complete equipment. It had two seminaries, a Home and an Indian Mission work, a parish school system, an official church paper, *Walther's Lutheraner,* with Walther as editor, and a doctrinal controversy on its hands. Pastor Grabau and his "Prussians" had been cordially invited by the Fort Wayne conference to attend the Chicago meeting. He stood aloof, prophesying disaster. He was soon to go over to direct and bitter attack. The attitude of Pfarrer Loehe, in Germany, was also in doubt. He was dissatisfied with the constitution. He disapproved of what he called "its strong intermixing of democratic, independent congregational principles." Synod, therefore, cordially invited him to attend

its second session, to be held at St. Louis, in 1848. Instead of accepting the invitation, Loehe entered into correspondence with Grabau.

These things might have been more calmly faced if the several elements composing the Synod had had a little more time to grow together and convince themselves that their "rights and duties were to be protected and guarded." But here it must not be overlooked that congregations served by men like Loeber, Fuerbringer and Brohm were not immediately convinced of the advantages of Synodical membership; that men like Keyl and Schieferdecker did not even become "advisory members" (*berathende glieder*); that Selle could not even persuade the Chicago congregation, in whose midst the Synod was organized, to join the new Church body; that changes in the constitution were vigorously urged by pastors and congregations, like Keyl, of Frohna, Mo.; Leonhard, of Lancaster, Ohio; Geier, of Watertown, Wis., who acted as if a failure to promptly endorse their pet notions would surely jeopardize the whole future of the Church at large. The new *Herr Praeses* had his work cut out for him. He was a little over thirty-five years of age when these new and ardu-

ous duties were imposed upon him. No wonder Sihler says of him that he was *"in seinen Gesichtszuegen merk-wuerdig gealtert"* ("in the expression of his face strangely aged"). No wonder Walther wrote to Lochner, September 20, 1850: "I look forward to our approaching Synodical proceedings with a trembling heart, yet with firm confidence in God's help." Never mind, *Herr Praeses,* "Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in Him: and He shall bring it to pass."

Chapter 19

Controversy with Buffalo

When David says, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up," he is not thinking so much of the labors he performed in his Lord's cause as of the controversies and contentions he endured because of his love of his Lord's word. He tells us this himself, for the whole text runs: "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached Thee are fallen upon me" (Ps. 69:9). He says the same thing in the 119th Psalm: "My zeal hath consumed me, because mine enemies have forgotten Thy words" (v. 139). That was the thing that hurt, the forgetting of his Lord's word.

Walther never really complains of the burden of his labors any more than Paul does when he apologizes for telling us, among other things, that "the care of all the churches came upon him daily." To be sure, he speaks of his work; usually at the close of a letter, when asking pardon for a seeming inattention or an imaginary briefness. He there may say; "Please be content for this

time with this little. At my return after a lengthy absence a whole mountain of to be disposed of business lies before me" (Vol. I, p. 135). But he does complain most bitterly of the unending controversies forced upon him by people who considered themselves to be the only faithful Lutherans and him a heretic and false prophet. That hurt. And so he writes to Stephanus Keyl: "I am often so tired of the conflict, that I am strongly tempted to bury my sword and shield, if no one wants it; and to spend my life, so much as the Lord of life and death may yet grant me, *meditando* like Jerome at the crib of Bethlehem. I am considered contentious; if I were rightly known, it would soon be seen that I rather shun contention, and that only God's command impels me to remain under arms." There is a nice alliteration in the German, which it is impossible to preserve. He says: "*Man haelt mich fuer streitsuechtig; ich bin vielmehr streitfluechtig.*" Still, his controversies were unceasing. For this reason, it might be said of Walther, as it was of Luther, "He was the best hated man in the Church of his day." And yet, like Luther, no man ever more highly appreciated true catholicity and hated sectarian separatism

and exclusiveness. In his first letter to Sihler, written in 1845, he says that even under Stephan their one aim had been to give evidence of the most perfect faithfulness to the true Lutheran Church, and that nothing had made them miss this more than their stubborn exclusiveness. "The more dangerous and pernicious this became for us, the more we long for a most careful preservation of true catholicity and an avoiding of all separatism" (Vol. I, p. 6). He writes to Brohm in 1846: "I hate the sectarian exclusion and self-inclusion (*Abschliessen und Sicheinschliessen*) of the Grabau-minded" (Vol. I, p. 7). He resents Grabau's having declared himself and his adherents to be *the* Church, when he calls the Synod he organized, "The Synod of the Lutheran Church emigrated from Prussia" (Vol. I, p. 88). This position reminds him of Stephan's teaching, and he does not hesitate to say: "Grabau with his adherents is nothing but the second, unimproved edition of Stephan and his adherents" (Vol. I, p. 88). Convinced of that fact, controversy was inevitable.

It was not sought. Walther had other things to do besides looking beyond his own congregation for work and trouble. For one thing, after his return home as President of

the newly-organized Synod, a most disastrous fire devastated a large section of St. Louis. Breaking out on the evening of Ascension Day, it laid waste several of the best streets of the city, destroyed 640 houses and 27 river steamers tied up at the wharves, demanded its toll of human life, and caused unspeakable suffering among the unfortunate people who had lost their homes and property. In his sermon, preached in Exaudi Sunday, Walther exclaims: "And who can count the tears and sighs which this calamity has pressed and will still press! Oh, and several dear members of our congregation also belong to the sorely smitten, who look with tears upon the ash heaps into which their homes and their possessions have been transformed."

Walther, with Trinity congregation, was at this time organizing the "Immanuel's District," and building a second church, which was dedicated Sexagesima Sunday, 1848, purchasing a cemetery, establishing a mission school, which afterwards became the "Concordia District" (now Kreuz); purchasing a fine lot for a new school building in the "Trinity District"; taking a most active interest in the affairs of Concordia College, Perry County; providing the salary for its

professor, Rector Goenner; regularly editing and issuing the *Lutheraner,* which became the property of Synod with the publication of its fourth volume. Since Walther remained editor, his labors were not lightened. If anything, they were made a little more burdensome by the suggestions and criticisms of well-intentioned but inexperienced people (Report of Second Convention, p. 25), who fully exercised the privileges suggested by the addition to the title, "Published by the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio and other States, edited by C. F. W. Walther." The congregation published a new Church hymnal in 1847, to replace the various eighteenth century collections in the hands of the people. The book was edited by Walther in association with other Missouri pastors, and printed by H. Ludwig and Co., 70 Vesey Street, New York. Walther writes to Brohm: "We have selected the hymnal with great pains and many sighs. God grant it may be worthy of use by the congregation of the faithful! I am very anxious for your judgment" (Letters, Vol. I, p. 39). The St. Louis *Gesammtgemeinde* generously presented this hymnal to the Synod in 1862, and it is being used by the "congregation of the faithful" to this

day. A revision has never even been suggested, which certainly says much for the correctness of the principles followed by Walther and his co-workers in its preparation. (See Guenther, p. 74.) The first "Agende" (Book of Worship) was published by authority of Synod in 1856. It is a compilation of the old orthodox Saxon orders. Loehe's "Agende," for which Friedrich Hommel wrote his "Liturgie Lutherischer Gemeinde Gottesdienste," in 1851, was used by the Michigan, Ohio and Indiana congregations. Hommel and the fourth part of Layritz's "Kern des Lutherischen Kirchengesangs," 1853, are the two sources of the worship music of the Missouri Synod. Loehe's "Agende" was gradually supplanted by the "Agende" published with the authority of Synod. Trinity congregation entertained the Synod during its second convention, held June 21 to July 1, 1848. The third convention was held at Fort Wayne, June 6-16, 1849. Walther writes Sihler, the Vice-President, on May 10, 1849, that his coming to the meeting is most improbable, because of an epidemic of cholera in St. Louis. Conditions must have been frightful. Entire families died out, and it was difficult to get wagons to remove the dead. Walther man-

aged to reach Fort Wayne before the close of the sessions, and then hastened back to St. Louis, where he and Vicar Buenger labored day and night among the afflicted and terrified people, playing the part of faithful pastors, as described by Luther in his tract, "If One may Flee Death?" written when the pest raged in Wittenberg. Walther issued a reprint of this tract, and regularly held services of intercession and prayer on Wednesday afternoons with his congregation during the entire period of sore trial and distress.

Walther's letters discussing and ordering Synodical affairs, together with the reports of the conventions of 1847, 1848 and 1849, give us a faint idea of the enormous amount of labor which devolved upon him through his being President of the new Church body, now growing by leaps and bounds. At the second convention the Synod counted fifty ministers and five school teachers as members, among them men like Wyneken, of Baltimore, Md.; Brauer, of Addison, Ill., and Brohm, of New York. At the third convention sixteen congregations, thirteen ministers and three teachers were received. The Synod began to take on a cosmopolitan character. Unlike the Pennsylvania Ministerium, where

the Wuertembergers predominated, or the New York Ministerium, where the Plattdeutsch made up the bulk of the congregation, the Missouri Synod, from the first, had a representation of Lutherans from the various sections of the fatherland. Among its ministers the North German element considerably outnumbered the Saxons, and the University of Goettingen was at least as well represented as Leipzig. As compared with other Synods, it contained a proportionately large number of splendidly educated men, well equipped to man its two college faculties and lead its aggressive missionary operations. True, its congregations were, as a rule, quite small and almost invariably poor. The three strongest congregations were St. Louis, with 2945 souls; Baltimore, with 1084, and Fort Wayne, with 1066. But it had set the stakes of its house in the strategic points of the Middle West, Chicago, St. Louis, Cleveland, Milwaukee, etc.; it had its outposts in the East; it was looking toward Iowa and Oregon, lengthening its cords and stretching the curtains of its habitation almost to the breaking point, enthusiastically following the lead of Walther, its teacher, organizer and missionary. Surely, these people, with their President, had enough to oc-

cupy them without seeking doctrinal controversies. Besides, as the first volumes of the *Lutheraner* show, they were under the constant necessity of defending the "form of sound words" committed to them and their newly organized congregations against what Doctor W. J. Mann calls "the delusions of Methodism."

But controversy came. Originally directed against Pastor Loeber and the other Saxon pastors, after the organization of the Synod and the election of Walther as President, the attack was transferred to them, and a most bitter warfare waged for twenty-five years, or until a majority of the Buffalo Synod pastors, on March 2, 1867, joined the Missouri Synod. Hochstetter, who was the *Diakonus* of Pastor Grabau, the "Senior *Ministerii*" of the Buffalo Synod, in his "History of the Missouri Synod," a book of 480 pages, devotes about 100 pages to a description of this controversy. He has not over-estimated its importance for the Church of this country. A glance at the doctrines stated, the principles enunciated, and the practices defended in the "Hirtenbrief" ("Pastoral Letter"), issued by Pastor Grabau, in 1840, "To the Brethren and Members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in

Buffalo, New York, Milwaukee, Eden and Little Hamburg, Albany, Portage, Canada," copies of which were sent to the Saxon pastors of Missouri for their examination and approval, does not merely show that these men (Loeber, Gruber, Keyl and Walther) were justified in protesting against "the assertion of hierarchical principles within the Lutheran Church." It shows that by thus protesting against "the assertion of these hierarchical principles," until they were forever silenced, they rendered the entire Church of America an immense service. Had the movement led by Grabau prevailed with any considerable number of Lutherans in this country, the representatives of the several Synodical bodies would not now be meeting in free conference "for the promotion of Christian unity through doctrinal discussion based upon the inspired word of God and the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church." If we were meeting at all, it would be for the discussion of holy orders, whether or not the succession of our bishops, procured through Scandinavia was of equal validity with the Anglican, and if the question of intention affected ordination. We would be solemnly discussing the ornaments rubric of the first Prayer Book of Edward,

and attaching more importance to eucharistic candles than to the doctrine of conversion. We would have an extreme high Church party, making salvation dependent upon outward membership in the visible Lutheran Church, as represented by its clergy, and insisting that the sacraments owe their validity and efficacy to ordination received from the Church thus constituted. We would not permit the local congregation and its pastors to deal with "open and profligate evil livers," but require them to submit all questions of discipline to the "Senior Ministerii," or bishop, as representing the Church, for adjudication. We would be demanding simple, unquestioning obedience on the part of the laity to the Church, not only in things spiritual, but in things temporal, so far as they are not opposed to the Word. Whether they are or not must again be decided by the clergy. In a word, we would have had an Oxford movement within the Lutheran Church flirting with Rome, after the style of Bishop Stephan, who, when the Romanists publicly dedicated a church in St. Louis, shortly after the arrival of the emigrant colony, required the Saxon pastors and candidates to attend and carefully observe the ceremonial performed by Bishop Rosati, in

order that they might know how to conduct themselves when it came to dedicating a church of their own.

Since extremes always provoke opposite extremes, this assumption of high Church superiority could not have failed to give force and point to those Puritan tendencies which aimed at the establishment of an "American Lutheran Church," as opposed to a "Lutheran Church in America." The doctrinal looseness which led to the publication of "The Definite Platform" would never have stopped with the enumeration of "five errors" in the Augsburg Confession. It would have rejected all confessions of faith, and finally made its appeal to the principle laid down by Zwingli, when he insisted that God does not require us to believe anything unreasonable. The lack of Lutheran self-consciousness, which made men put the mourners' bench in the place of the altar, substitute the revival system for catechetical instruction, "new measures" for time-honored practices and usages, individualistic emotionalism for all forms of worship, would never have rested until it had rooted out stock and branch every confessional ceremony of the Church, in order to conform, even in outward appearance, with the sur-

rounding denominations. Our splendid Common Service would never have been prepared, much less adopted and used by any considerable portion of those Church bodies to whom the credit for its production must be gratefully awarded. What is worse, the formative principle of the Reformation, "that God's word is the sole and absolute authority, and rule of faith, and of life," would have gone by the board. If, as Doctor Krauth so correctly and emphatically says, "No man, without accepting this principle, can be truly Evangelical, Protestant or Lutheran," then, we must ask if this "assertion of hierarchical principles" had prevailed, what would have become of the Church in America? Let Walther answer the question: *"Meine Befuerchtung geht dahin, dass diese Preussen eine Sekte werden wollen"* ("I fear that these Prussians aim to become a sect"). (Letters, Vol. I, p. 18.) Succeeding in that, would they not aim to make every other part of the Church a sect? And would that not mean that the Church in America, as a true Church visible, had ceased to be? No wonder Walther said in his prospectus of the *Lutheraner:* "It is to prove that it" (the Lutheran Church) "is the true Church of Christ, not a sect." "It is to unite the di-

vided members of the Lutheran Church, to recall those that are fallen away, and to prove that our Church has not and never can become extinct." He wrote the same thing into the constitution of the Missouri Synod, when, in Chap. I, ¶ 4, this was stated to be a ground for its organization: "The preservation and cultivation of the unity of the pure Confession (Eph. 4:3-6; 1 Cor. 1:10), and the common warding off of separatistic and sectarian confusion (Rom. 16:17)." As he wrote to Sihler: "The most careful preservation of true catholicity and an avoiding of all separatism."

This was the real issue. That we have not overstated it, appears from the official seal of the Buffalo Synod, which, in allusion to Revelation 12, showed a woman fleeing from a dragon into the wilderness. According to Pastor Grabau's interpretation, America was the wilderness to which the Church had fled before the dragon of the "Prussian Union." Hochstetter's account of the "Buffalo Colloquium," held November 20, 1866, shows how this narrow conception influenced all the theological thinking of Grabau's adherents. Finally the public meeting, so long sought by Missouri, and prevented by the "Senior Ministerii" of Buffalo,

was arranged. Representatives of the two Synods met face to face and discussed the doctrine (1) of the Church, (2) of the ministerial office, (3) of excommunication, (4) of the power of the ministerial office with respect to adiaphora, and (5) of ordination. Full agreement was reached with eleven members of the Buffalo Synod, who, thereupon, joined the Missouri Synod. Grabauism, "the assertion of hierarchical principles within the Church of America," was dead. The principle of catholicity, so briefly and magnificently stated in Article VII, of the Augsburg Confession, was reasserted, never again, let us hope, to be attacked by Romanizing tendencies within the Reformation Church. And, let us add, may the words Walther wrote to Brunn, in 1861, more and more become true: "Although I especially must suffer heavily through this conflict, I more and more see that this conflict, too, instead of serving to hinder the kingdom of God, which always appears to be the case, must only serve to its advancement" (Letters, Vol. I, p. 161), "the advancement of true catholicity and the avoiding of all sectarian separatism."

Chapter 20

Loehe and the Iowa Synod

On the eve of the fourth convention of Synod, Walther wrote Lochner: "I look forward to our approaching Synodical proceedings with trembling heart, still with firm confidence in God's help" (Vol. I, p. 72). In his opening address he explains his fears: "Our Synod . . . is approaching the severest trial which the Church can ever experience, a trial in comparison with which those of sanguinary persecution are to be accounted small; in short, it is this—temptation to false doctrine." He was not thinking of Grabau alone, for after describing Romanizing tendencies in the Church of Germany and America, which heretofore had had little influence upon the Missouri Synod, he goes on to say: "Most recently, however, we have finally been drawn into serious conflict with the same from two sides." The one side was Grabau and Buffalo. The other side was Loehe and Iowa.

If the break with the emigrant Prussians hurt, the break with Loehe hurt a hundred fold, for J. C. Wilhelm Loehe, Pfarrer at

Neuendettelsau, Bavaria, from the day when Wyneken, at his visit to Germany, in 1841-42, had turned his sympathetic interest to the dire needs of the Lutherans in America, was the most loyal and generous friend of the cause of confessional Lutheranism in this country. He not only sent over men to shepherd the scattered children of the Reformation Church, among them men with a university training like Sihler, Craemer and Schaller, but entire missionary congregations. At the Fort Wayne meeting, in 1846, preliminary to the organization of the Missouri Synod, there were a dozen Loehe men present. Others were being sent over, so that the new *Synödlein* received a total of eighty-four pastors through Loehe's efforts. (See Neve, "A Brief History," etc.). Loehe established the so-called "Practical Seminary," or Missionary Institute, at Fort Wayne, most liberally supported it, and for the simple asking, by formal deed, dated September 8, 1847, presented the institution to the newly organized Synod, with several most acceptable conditions, the first of which read: "That it forever serve the Lutheran Church and train ministers and shepherds for it. As the Lutheran Church, we recognize only that which adheres to all the Confessions of the

Lutheran Book of Concord." There is no qualification in these words. Moreover, Loehe most generously promised his continued support to this institution, which, on August 29, 1850, dedicated a building erected with his help, and named "The Wolter House," after the splendid young teacher whom Loehe had sent over in 1846, and who died, only thirty-one years old, of the cholera, August 31, 1849. And now, after all of that, at the opening of the fourth convention of Synod, on October 3, 1850, barely one month after the dedication of the "Wolter House," Walther feels himself constrained to point out to the assembled pastors and delegates the threatening danger of a temptation to false doctrine approaching from two sides. The one side was represented by Grabau, the other by Loehe, Synod's greatest material benefactor. That hurt indeed.

But what did Walther mean? How could the man who on September 8, 1847, wrote, "As the Lutheran Church we recognize only that which adheres to all the Confessions of the Lutheran Book of Concord," even be remotely suspected of false teaching? The answer may be given by the word "*Offene Fragen*" (open questions), used to designate

Loehe's attitude toward the Confessions, an attitude determined by his position on certain other doctrines, as well as his ambitious plans for Lutheran Church union. For Pfarrer Loehe aimed not merely to gather the Lutherans of America, but the Lutherans of Australia, and of the whole world into one general Church body. It was, therefore, but natural that he should desire to have some voice in the direction of Church affairs in America, although he could not possibly have any real knowledge of American conditions. The constitution of seventy-two paragraphs prepared for the Franconian congregations of Michigan, defining with infinite detail everything, even to the provision of *christlische Hebammen* (Christian midwives), amply proves that. Consequently, while in the main satisfied with the doings of the brethren in the new world, Loehe could not but consider what he called "the strong intermixing of democratic, independentistic and congregational principles in their constitution as doubtful and deplorable." Like Grabau and Stephan before him, Loehe wanted *ein festes Kirchenregiment* (a firm Church government). While not quite ready to agree with Grabau, he was still less ready to agree with the Missourians and

their teachings, as set forth in Walther's "Kirche und Amt." The assertion of the dignities and rights of all true believers whom God hath made "to be kings and priests forever" (Rev. 1:6; 1 Peter 2:9), used with such telling force by Luther against the pretensions of the Roman hierarchy, and written by Walther into the constitution of the Missouri Synod, was in Loehe's eyes *Americkanische Poebelherrschaft* (American mob rule).

Moreover, Loehe also publicly taught and defended certain views with respect to the doctrine of the last things, much in vogue among the German Pietists of the day, e.g., the establishment of a millennial kingdom at Christ's second coming, with a general conversion of all Israel after the appearance of a personal Antichrist, etc., views which Walther and the Missourians held to have been rejected and condemned by Article XVII of the Augsburg Confession. A great stickler for liturgical forms, he went so far as to employ a kind of extreme unction for the sick, besides displaying an extreme fondness for the institutional and conventual life of the Church of Rome.

Pfarrer Loehe was undoutedly a far bigger and broader man than "Senior Min-

isterii Grabau, not to speak of "Bishop" Stephan. Still, it is peculiar that the three men had something in common. They wanted a "firm Church government." They had a profound mistrust of the laity. They had a fondness for colonization schemes. By the way, Walther's most intimate friend, Fick, with other men, also had a scheme of this kind. Walther writes him: "Are you trying to found a Lutheran republic? . . . The Church is to be a salt of the earth; one does not dump that into some corner, but into the midst of the mass" (Vol. I, p. 99). Loehe, Grabau and Stephan had an immense enthusiasm for correct liturgical form. In the judgment of Deindoerfer, who wrote a history of the Lutheran Church in America, this insistence upon form was often a hindrance to the growth of the Iowa Synod, organized by Loehe in 1854. But the most dangerous was their attitude toward the Confessions. Grabau attached as much, if not more, importance and weight to the Pommeranian Kirchenordnung as to the Book of Concord. Stephan, who urged the reading of Luther and the Book of Concord whenever his pet ideas were contradicted by these undisputable authorities, was wont to tell his adherents: "This must be differently

understood, for Luther in other places expresses himself more clearly"; or, "This is not suited to our times," etc. Loehe, who refused to be bound by the entire doctrinal content of the Confessions, spoke of the necessity of striving for further doctrinal development, tried to distinguish between those parts of the Confessions which are and are not of binding force, etc. In each of the three cases, there was a qualified acceptance of the Confessions. Of the three, Grabau's position was entitled to the most consideration, for the Confessors of the Church had also written its Kirchenordnungen, even though they had never intended that they should have the force of or be used to interpret the Confessions. Walther, therefore, writes to Otteson: "The Buffalo men, like ourselves, would be strictly Lutheran; the Iowa men, however, wish us to concede that unity and purity of doctrine is unnecessary, and a demanding of it fanaticism" (Vol. II, p. 110).

Remembering that the issue was primarily the doctrine of the Church and the ministerial office, it is at once plain that the attitude of these men toward the Confessions was determined by aims they cherished and theories they held for its organization and advancement. They did not approach the Confes-

sions with an open mind. They approached them with preconceived notions, seeking endorsement of previously formed theories. Walther writes Fuerbringer in 1867, after the Colloquium with Iowa: "The Fritschels . . . seem to have rummaged through Luther and the fathers (*die Alten*) in general only with the aim of finding vouchers for their doctrine of 'Open Questions' " (Vol. II, p. 119). Using detached quotations from Luther and the Confessions as wax to graft your own theories on the great body of Lutheran doctrine is bad business.

In God's wise providence events were so shaped that Walther, when he approached Luther and the Confessions, seeking light on these questions, had no theories of his own. Whatever theories he may have had were swept away by Stephan's dreadful fall. In the indescribable confusion and distress which followed, Walther, ill in body and soul, humbly sought an answer to the questions: "Are we a Church?" "Am I a Christian minister?" "Have I the right, by Christ's command and authority, to preach the gospel and administer the sacraments?" To answer these questions he dug down to bedrock, the Scriptures, Luther and the Confessions. He formulated his answer in the

Altenburg Theses, his book on "The Voice of Our Church on the Question of Church and Office," and his other book, on "The Correct Form of a Local Evangelical Lutheran Congregation Independent of the State." Of this work he writes to Sihler: "The paper is really the practical amplification of the principles laid down in the book on 'The Church and the Office' (Vol. I, p. 187). It showed that just the Lutheran doctrine of the Church and the Office forms the firmest foundation upon which a particular Church (*eine Partikularkirche*) may build itself in correct form," and "that our old faithful teachers, although they lived in a state Church, under consistorial organization, on the basis of their doctrine of Church, Office, Church government, etc., did not conceive of the form of a local congregation independent of the state, otherwise than it is here found represented." He had Trinity congregation and its organization, together with the organization of the Misouri Synod in mind. Stephan, Grabau and Loehe said: "It is expedient to organize so and so. We may do this, for Luther, the Confessions and the Kirchenordnungen say so and so." Walther says: "The Scriptures, the Confessions, Luther and our faithful old teachers say so

and so. We must organize accordingly." There was a difference. And this difference expressed itself in their attitude toward the Confessions, which brings us back to Loehe and his "Open Questions."

That there should be any doctrinal difference between them, and especially a doctrinal difference which might mean a disruption of the relations which had hitherto existed between the Synod and its benefactor, filled Walther with alarm. He was no longer President of Synod, for when he became Professor and President of the Altenburg College, which was removed to St. Louis in 1849, Pastor Wyneken, of Baltimore, was called as vicar of Trinity congregation, and elected President of Synod at the fourth convention in the fall of 1850. This convention again, like the previous conventions, cordially and urgently invited Pfarrer Loehe to visit America and attend the convention of 1851. When he found it impossible to accept the invitation, Synod, at this convention, acting upon a suggestion presented by the St. Louis District Conference, the St. Louis congregation, President Wyneken, Doctor Sihler and others, resolved to send Walther and Wyneken to Neuendettelsau for a conference with Pfarrer Loehe. Every possible effort was

to be made to remove existing differences and avoid a possible rupture. Incidentally it was hoped that a personal acquaintance on the part of these two men with some of the leaders of the Church in Germany might prove to be of benefit both to America and the fatherland.

An account of this journey and its immediate results, written by Walther, was published in the *Lutheraner,* Vol. 8, Nos. 13-21. A long letter to his wife, dated Erlangen, October 11, 1851, supplies further noteworthy details. His meeting with Doctor Marbach, who had been his opponent at the Altenburg Debate, must have been most interesting. Walther and Wyneken visited Doctor Guericke in Halle, Doctor Kahnis in Leipzig, and Doctor Harless in Dresden. In Erlangen Walther met the friend of his youth, Doctor Franz Delitzsch, who introduced him to other members of the faculty, the Professors Hofmann, Thomasius, Hoefling and Schmid. The two delegates attended various conferences and meetings. They were everywhere most cordially received. Walther also visited Langenschursdorf, his home, and Bräunsdorf, the place of his first brief pastorate.

At Neuendettelsau they were welcomed

most heartily by Loehe, who dedicated a special number, beautifully gotten up, of his paper, *Kirchliche Mitteilungen,* to his two visitors. It almost seemed that a perfect understanding had been reached. After this first conference Loehe met the two delegates twice in Nürnburg, and they called on him twice at Neuendettelsau. After making several visits in Northern Germany, they returned home, reaching St. Louis February 2, 1852. Sihler, whose judgment in these matters was apt to be correct, writes in his autobiography: "Unfortunately, they had not attained the main object of their journey. Pfarrer Loehe, it is true, was unable to oppose anything valid to the convincing arguments of Professor Walther, still he clung to his vague assertions that the Confessions of our Church had no such binding force as we held them to have." Walther tells his wife why: "One finds one thing almost everywhere with all this cry of Lutheran Church; namely, one is not minded to seat one's self with childlike simplicity at the feet of our old teachers, and before one attempts to seek everything out of the Scriptures, to first hear these teachers who have spoken unto us the word of God following their faith and considering the end of their conversation" (Heb.

13:7) (Vol. I, p. 78). Indeed, these German theologians made the criticism against Walther and other Missouri writers that they had produced nothing new. Their great word was *Fortentwicklung* (progressive development). In the above quoted letter Walther writes: "Now, after I have seen much in Germany which encourages me to praise God, I must, nevertheless, say, God has still done the greatest unto us in America" (p. 81). If that is true, it is because God through Walther taught us "to seat ourselves with childlike simplicity at the feet of our old teachers."

The break with Loehe came in 1852. Loehe had planned the establishment of "a kind of Protestant convent" in the Saginaw Valley. It was to be a hospice, a sanatorium, a seminary for pastors and teachers, a missionary outpost for Michigan, and the center of a strong Lutheran colony. He had selected a young man, trained and educated under his influence, to become rector of this *Pilgerhaus*. This young man, whom he called his "Timothy," had studied theology at Erlangen, and came to America in 1848. He was present at the Synod of 1850, where he for several days defended Loehe's position in debate with Walther, and finally,

with open, manly frankness, admitted himself to have been overcome by the truth. The young man was Gottlieb Schaller, afterwards, with Walther, pastor in St. Louis and professor at Concordia Seminary.

When Schaller, placing his love of the truth above the demands of sincere and grateful friendship, declined to become the rector of Loehe's *Pilgerhaus,* Pastor Grossmann was sent over to lead the undertaking, with instructions that it should "remain for the first in Church fellowship, but not in membership connection with the Synod of Missouri." This was most unfortunate, for the Saginaw Valley pastors and congregations were among its most active members. Although Loehe had offered no objection to "Seminary Inspector" Grossmann's seeking membership in the Missouri Synod, he felt it his duty "to withdraw himself from the influences of the Synodical spirit." Very naturally the Saginaw Valley congregations, acting through the Synod and Wyneken, its President, requested Loehe to either place the new institution under control of the Synod, or abandon the undertaking. Pastor Loehe did neither. His adherents, twenty-two in number, under the leadership of "Seminary Inspector" Grossmann and Pastor

Deindorfer, journeyed to Iowa, where they founded the colony "St. Sebald at the Spring," sixty miles north of Dubuque. That was in 1853. In 1854 two other men came over, sent by Loehe. These two, with Grossmann and Deindorfer, met at St. Sebald, on August 24, 1854, and organized the Iowa Synod. One of the men was Sigmund Fritschel. His brother, Gottlieb Fritschel, came over in 1857. These two brothers are the real founders and leaders of this Synod, which, according to Loehe's plan, was doctrinally to occupy a middle ground between Buffalo and Missouri. This "middle ground" idea, by the way, is a somewhat vague and pleasant fiction. Doctor Mann, in his "Lutherans in America," also divides the Church into "the Left Wing," "the Right Wing," and "the Center." People who make that division somehow forget that the location of the center always depends upon where you happen to stand. Thus Walther and the Missourians might claim to occupy the conservative confessional center or middle ground between Buffalo and Iowa. In plain words, this "middle ground" or "center" talk usually means very little.

Loehe did not intend to establish an opposition Synod against Missouri, occupying the

same territory and setting up altar against altar. With his ignorance of American conditions, he doubtless imagined that the two Church bodies could work side by side in separate geographically divided territories. The result, however, was bitter opposition and controversy. An attempt to allay this was made by the holding of a Colloquium between representatives of the two Synods at Milwaukee, in 1867. Unfortunately, the desired result, unity of faith, was not attained.

The statement has been made by Doctor Neve, in his "Brief History," etc., that "The Iowa Synod does not as a Synod represent the views of Loehe, but rather his conviction that, since there was agreement in the confessional doctrine, the points in dispute were not of sufficient magnitude to justify a rupture in the Church." To which Walther made this reply: "If we permit in the midst of the Lutheran Church the departure from any one point of the Confessions, we tear down the Lutheran Church itself, and show ourselves as traitors who have taken position within her walls to raze her fortifications under pretence of repairing them and open wide to the enemy the entrance over their ruins" (*Lutheraner,* Vol. XI, p. 203).

Walther always spoke of Loehe with respect and esteem. Thus, in a letter to Fick, he writes: "It is my opinion that Loehe's frankness is just as honorable, as it renders his error harmless for all those who wish to see; while the sanctimonious hypocrisy of the Grabauites is just as contemptible as it serves to seduction" (Vol. I, p. 95). Still, this controversy brought Walther no little calumny and reproach. Here were people holding out the hand of fellowship like Zwingli at Marburg, saying, "Our differences are immaterial." Here is Walther refusing them the recognition they sought. Whereupon Iowa declared at Milwaukee, "The Missourians are committing a sin of frightful bearing which they can never answer for." Was this true? Let Walther reply: "Wherever doctrinal controversy arose, there was never peace, unless the erring party came over to the truth, or that new parties formed, or that the advocates of the truth sacrificed this most precious of all goods" (Vol. I, p. 96). "We therefore need men who in trial have experienced the excellence (*Herrlichkeit*) of the word; yea, of every word, who know that in each eternal life is enclosed, and that, therefore, with each eternal life may also be lost; each must be

defended to the last" (*"bis aufs Blut"*). Plainly, Walther had read Isaiah 66:2: "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word." Having read that, he had no choice but to stand firm, and, like Luther, simply say, "It is written." That he, too, rendered the Church an immense service by so doing is at least indicated by the Intersynodical Conference held at St. Paul, Minn., May 3 and 4, 1916, at which Conference debated points of doctrine were discussed and stated in a form acceptable to 555 pastors, representing the Missouri, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa and other Synods.

Chapter 21

"A True Peace Theologian"

In his great tract, "If a Soldier May be in a State of Grace?" Martin Luther makes the point that "the civil power is not established of God to break peace and begin war, but to preserve peace and prevent war." He then goes on and uses the text, "Scatter Thou the people that delight in war" (Ps. 68:30), with telling force, to show that there is a mighty difference between "will and must, desire and necessity," arguing that God always defeats and scatters the people who begin strife without just cause. This truth is capable of an application to the Church. While Walther's entire life was filled with controversy, it may be truthfully said that he never sought or provoked a religious conflict. His invariable rule of conduct was: "Let us therefore follow after the things which make" (not for strife, but) "for peace" (Rom. 14:19).

The Lutheran Church, as "the Church of theologians," has doubtless also produced its share of what the Germans call *Streittheologen* (strife-theologians). Walther

was not one of them. Guenther truthfully calls him *"ein rechter Friedenstheolog"* ("a true peace theologian"). While he well knew that the Church on earth can never be anything but a Church militant, and that a complete cessation of all spiritual warfare means a denial of her character as a true Church, he also knew that the great end of all its struggles and controversies must ever be the establishment and preservation of peace. This appears not only from his letters, the prospectus for the *Lutheraner,* the constitution of the Missouri Synod, but also from *Lehre und Wehre* (*Doctrine and Defence*), a theological journal issued at his suggestion and under his editorship, in 1855. Like the *Lutheraner,* this, too, was at first called *Walther's Lehre und Wehre.*

The need of such a *Predigerzeitung* (ministers' paper) had engaged his attention for some time. The *Lutheraner* had admirably served its first purpose, and gathered the men who founded the Synod into visible unity of faith. It had gained a large and increasing number of readers among the members of the congregations. This necessitated its being edited rather as a layman's church paper. On the other hand, the attacks and criticisms of the opponents of the

new Church body in unfriendly theological publications, coupled with the difficulty of securing an opportunity to reply for the correction of errors and misstatements, compelled Walther and the Synod to seek some medium for its self-defence and the strengthening of its ministerium through a thorough discussion of the great questions agitating the Church. But the new journal did not stop there. Indeed, it went a step beyond the *Lutheraner*. While the *Lutheraner* made its appeal to individuals and aimed "to unite the divided members of the Lutheran Church," *Walther's Lehre und Wehre* made its appeal to other Lutheran Church bodies, and aimed to unite them. This especially appears from the foreword to its second volume, written by him in 1856, only nine years after the founding of the Synod. Briefly reviewing the state of the Church in America, the article ends with a call for the holding of free conferences for the promotion of perfect unity and peaceful co-operation on the part of all who unqualifiedly accept the Augsburg Confession as their confession of faith.

This call was suggested and invited by the publication in 1855 of the "Definite Synodical Platform," a revision of the Augsburg Confession in the interest of "American

Lutheranism," as presented by the Doctors Schmucker, Sprecher and Kurtz, of the General Synod. The efforts of these men to develop a form of Lutheranism adapted to an American environment, are usually described as an attempt to modify Lutheranism by the Puritan element. As Doctor Mann pointed out in 1857, this statement is not entirely correct, for "the doctrinal system of Puritanism is Calvinistic, while the doctrinal system of this "American Lutheranism" was distinctly Zwinglian. "Puritanic-Methodistic English Protestantism," he says, exerted its influence "more particularly upon the spirit of piety, upon Christian life, its morality and forms of worship." (See "Lutheranism in America," p. 21ff.) With the publication of the "Definite Platform," the District Synods composing the General Synod were called upon to signify their adoption of it as their confession of faith. Doctor Walther points out that but three of them succumbed to this temptation to repudiate the Magna Charta of our Church, namely, the Wittenberg Synod, the Olive Branch Synod and the English Synod of Ohio. Almost all other Synods, which had opportunity to discuss the matter, repudiated the new doc-

trinal basis "with hardly to be expected unanimity." This fact fills Walther and all who love the Lutheran Zion of this country with great joy and hope for the future. It contains, he says, a pressing summons to us to foster the unity which God by His grace has already brought forth. He then points to the free conferences and Church days (*Kirchentage*) held by the brethren in Germany, and closes his foreword with a call for the arrangement of similar meetings in this country to be attended by all who accept the Unaltered Augsburg Confession of 1530, in order "to attempt the final realization of one united Evangelical Lutheran Church of North America." He promises for himself, his fellow-theologians and laymen, to attend such a free conference whenever and wherever it may be held. While such gatherings and conferences can have only a private character, and the persons attending can take part, not as representing their respective Synods, but only in a personal capacity, he feels certain "that a personal verbal intercourse and exchange cannot fail to be salutary, and would assuredly, above all, bring forth this incomparable blessing that the conflict which is still indeed necessary in our Church would take on and

keep the character of a mutual emulation among brethren for the faithful preservation of the precious treasure of doctrinal purity and unity" (*Lehre und Wehre*, Vol. II, pp. 1-5). Surely no further evidence is required to prove that Guenther's estimate of Walther is correct. Only "*ein rechter Friedenstheolog*" could write in this fashion.

It is impossible to discuss the "Definite Platform" without saying this: Its rejection by the General Synod plainly proves that it would be most wrong to hold that Church body responsible for its publication. This attempt to substitute what was practically a new creed for the standard to which all Lutherans have ever rallied and clung was the act of a few men, prominent and influential, it is true, but who thereby sacrificed their previous prominence and influence. Walther correctly gauged the situation when he said that its almost unanimous repudiation was a cause for rejoicing and a ground of hope for all who love our Lutheran Zion in America.

As we look back, now that sixty years have elapsed, we can see that great good came out of this open attempt to Zwinglianize and Puritanize the Church. The attempt, it is said, had to be made. When we consider the weakness of men and the strength of tempta-

tion, this is, perhaps, true. It was later made in a petty way by some of the young men who established the first purely English congregations of the Missouri Synod. They, too, promised themselves a larger measure of success if they made a futile attempt to keep and defend Lutheran doctrine while conforming in all outward things to the usages of their Arminian and Puritan neighbors. Being made, it was bound to fail. Its failure was recognized by its own advocates. Thus Doctor Samuel Sprecher is reported to have said: "I once thought that a Lutheranism modified by the Puritan element was desirable; but I have given up its desirableness, and am convinced of its hopelessness" (Neve, p. 83).

Its failure gave impetus to the cause of confessional Lutheranism, not only within the General Synod, out of which the General Council was organized in 1866, but it also indirectly led to the organization of the Synodical Conference in 1872—results which the framers of the "Definite Synodical Platform" neither designed nor desired.

Walther's call for the holding of free conferences met with immediate response. The first was held at Columbus, Ohio, October 1, 1856. It was attended by fifty-four ministers

and nineteen laymen, members of four different Synods—Missouri, the Joint Synod of Ohio, and the New York and Pennsylvania Ministeriums. Walther's motion, urging a consideration of the Augsburg Confession, article by article, prevailed, and Articles 1-7 were discussed and accepted at this first gathering. Three other such free conferences were held during the ensuing years. One at Pittsburgh, October 29 to November 4, 1857; at Cleveland, August 5-11, 1858; at Fort Wayne, July 14-20, 1859. The discussion of the Augustana was continued, and the Articles 7-14, and Article 28, accepted. Of course this left Article 17, with its condemnation of Chiliasm, and Article 18, "of Free Will," Article 20, "of Faith and Good Works," with their bearing on the doctrine of conversion untouched. The former was to keep the Iowa Synod from joining the Synodical Conference; the other was to take the Joint Synod of Ohio out of it after it had joined.

Walther was present at all of these gatherings but the last, when a severe throat trouble prevented his attendance. He, of course, took most active part in all of the proceedings. His services toward this attempt to promote the great cause of Christian unity through the organization of a united Luth-

eran Church in America, were recognized by the adoption of a resolution by the Fort Wayne conference expressing regret that "Professor Walther, who gave the first impulse to these conferences, and through whom God the Lord has made so many a blessing to come unto them, should this time have been prevented from taking part in the proceedings; with the wish that it may please God to soon restore this noble instrument (*edle Werkzeug*), and for long preserve it unto His Church."

Walther's health became worse and worse, causing the gravest apprehensions to his intimate associates, to the St. Louis faculty and congregation, and to the entire Synod. Finally, Pastor Wyneken, the President of Synod, who since 1858 resided at Fort Wayne, and Professor Craemer, of the Practical Seminary, which was still located at that place, traveled to St. Louis to persuade Walther to undertake a trip to Germany seeking restoration of his health. The St. Louis congregation took immediate action, most willingly offered to defray all expenses connected with the journey, and sent its Board of Elders, with the college faculty, to its beloved *Oberpfarrer,* beseeching him to give up all work and follow the

advice of his physicians, who recommended a sea voyage and the use of some mineral bath. A peculiar fear made him hesitate, namely, the fear that his acceptance of the generous offer of the congregation might give some cause for offence. He mentions this in an affecting farewell letter published in the *Lutheraner,* after he had decided to make the trip. He speaks of it again in a letter to his wife written from Germany, and dated July 14, 1860. He says: "But one thing now often troubles me, namely, that I am wandering around the world as a most useless person, and have wasted and am still wasting so much money. By God's grace I have managed to keep the reputation in St. Louis that I am not serving my brethren for the body's sake; now the thought plagues me that I have sacrificed this my good fame." Could conscientiousness go further than this?

He left St. Louis February 6, 1860, accompanied by his son Constantin, and his nephew, Stephanus Keyl, traveling via New Orleans and returning via New York, August 20, "healed of his bodily infirmity," to reach St. Louis August 28. At the October meeting of Synod President Wyneken reported: "Our dear and precious teacher, Professor Walther, is, thanks be to God,

again in our midst, restored and strengthened by his trip and return from Germany. May God keep him a blessing to us for long to come."

There is a full report of his journey, the men of prominence he met, his impressions of Church conditions, etc., in *Lehre und Wehre,* Vol. VI, p. 193, and in the *Lutheraner,* Vol. XVII. His letters to his wife, written for the intimacy of his family circle and chosen friends, give us additional and interesting details (Vol. I, pp. 138-159). Among his more important visits were the visit to Pastor Harms in Hermannsburg, and Pastor Brunn, in Steeden, with whom he arranged for the sending over of "helpers in need" to the "Practical Seminary," after they had received some previous training in the schools founded by these friends of the Church in America. Doctor Marbach, his opponent at the Altenburg Debate, died while Walther was in Germany. He attended the funeral services at Leipzig, on June 9, 1860, and printed the funeral sermon of Pastor Ahlfeldt, of St. Thomas' Church in the *Lutheraner* (Vol. XVII, No. 2). The short notes of his diary, which were amplified in his editorial correspondence for *Lehre und Wehre* (Vol. VI), show that the

thoughts which especially occupied his mind at this period were the questions being discussed by the free conferences he had inaugurated—the great question of Lutheran unity. Here are a few of his notes:

"An admonition to our Synod to keep the unity in which it stands."

"This unity makes us strong despite our weakness."

"Not a unity of stagnation, but of living activity."

"Unity not only among ourselves, but also with the faithful Church of all times."

It is the thought expressed in his Foreword to Vol. II of *Lehre und Wehre*, "*Die endliche Darstellung einer einigen evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche von Nordamerika*" ("The final realization of one united Evangelical Lutheran Church of North America") He carried it with him everywhere. His illness and absence, doubtless, contributed to a temporary discontinuance of these free conferences. A more potent factor was the lack of real interest on the part of the Church at large. The leaven of confessional Lutheranism had not yet sufficiently permeated the whole lump. Other and more urgent problems were pressing for solution. The Eastern Synods had troubles of their

own and little real appreciation of the importance and needs of the West. The whole Church, with the exception of the Missouri Synod, was in a state of flux. The rule of action in many cases was expediency rather than conviction or principle. Difference of language wielded a far greater influence than it does to-day. Difficulty of communication, the approaching civil war, intense political agitation—all these things combined to render abortive Walther's efforts in the direction of unity and union. The withdrawal from the General Synod of the Pennsylvania Ministerium and the New York Ministerium, the organizing of the General Council, the joining of this body by the Wisconsin Synod, the Minnesota Synod, the Michigan Synod, only to withdraw again; the refusal of the Ohio Synod to join the new body, the *zuwartende Stellung* (expectant attitude) of the Iowa Synod, the unending discussion of the "Galesburg Rule" and the "Four Points," the organization and upbuilding of the Scandinavian Synods, the inevitable friction caused by clashing missionary and educational interests—all of these movements, activities, debates, approachments, and withdrawals, showed that the leaven was indeed at work, but that the time had not yet come

for the results of this work to appear. The dough was being kneaded, but the time for baking was not at hand.

Still there was an approachment on the part of the several Synods, which, under Walther's leadership, organized the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference at Milwaukee, July 10-16, 1872, shortly after the Missouri Synod had celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of its organization. Preliminary meetings had been held with the Ohio Synod (Columbus, March 4-6, 1867), with the Wisconsin Synod (Milwaukee, October, 21, 22, 1868); with both these Synods, the Synod of Illinois, the Minnesota Synod, and the *Synoden for den Norske Ev. Luth. Kirke in Amerika* (Chicago, January 11-13, 1871, and Fort Wayne, November 14-16, 1871). The constitution prepared at these preliminary meetings was adopted and Walther elected President of this new Church federation, which stated its purpose to be:

"The outward expression of the spiritual unity of the respective Synods; mutual strengthening in faith and confession; advancement of unity in faith and practice, and removal of occurring threatening interruption of the same; united activity for common causes; efforts toward a bounding of Synods

according to territorial boundaries, provided that language does not separate; the union of all Lutheran Synods of America into one faithful American Lutheran Church."

As we study the constitution of the Synodical Conference, together with the first reports of its proceedings, a number of interesting things appear:

1. Of course, the constitution of the Synodical Conference, like all efforts at organization led by Walther, is but an affirmation and application of the Augsburg theses as developed in *Kirche und Amt* and *Die Rechte Gestalt.* A supreme emphasis is laid upon the Confession of Faith, which is God's word, and the Book of Concord of 1580. The Norwegian Synod, which put the question if it might become a constituent part of the Synodical Conference, if it as a separate body (*Einzelsynode*) confessed adherence only to the unaltered Augsburg Confession and the Smaller Catechism of Doctor Martin Luther, was informed that "the Scandinavian Lutherans had always been recognized as a faithful Church, although all symbolical books had not obtained ecclesiastical and legal (*kirchenrechtlich*) recognition with them; nevertheless the Synodical Conference self-evidently required that the venerable

Norwegian Synod, insomuch as it was a part of the Synodical Conference, should with it confess to all the symbolical books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, and in connection with any doctrinal controversy which might occur, govern itself and suffer itself to be judged according to them." Plainly, there was to be no union at the expense of doctrinal truth or explicit confessional statement.

2. While the constitution of the Missouri Synod places a great emphasis upon Christian missions, it makes no provision for Christian benevolence. The constitution of the Synodical Conference in paragraph 5, "Objects of Activity," speaks of *die Kranken- und Waisenhaus-sache* (the hospital and orphanage cause). It thus represents an advance upon the constitution of the Missouri Synod, and a distinct recognition of the importance and value of united benevolence as a manifestation of the unity of faith.

3. Provision was made by a by-law at the fifth convention that every constituent body was to submit a copy of its printed report containing a summary of its doctrinal discussions for examination as to their orthodoxy, to committees appointed by the President of the Synodical Conference, to which they made a report in writing. (*Lehrwacht*—doc-

trinal watchfulness.). Paul's injunction to Timothy, "Take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine," was to be taken with utmost seriousness.

4. The subject discussed by the Synodical Conference at its first session was a paper presented by Professor Loy, of the Ohio Synod, on the question, "What is our duty toward the English population of our country?" The other paper discussed the Lutheran doctrine of justification. Plainly, these people held it to be the supreme duty of the Church to preach the great fundamental doctrine of justification by faith to this country in its own official language as soon as this could be done without a neglect of what was discussed in the third paper, "Innere Mission," or "Home Missions." They were anything but narrow. German as they were, they fully recognized America's greatest need and the necessity of united effort to meet it. They, therefore, did not merely concern themselves with the working out of some plan to prevent the setting up of altar against altar in jointly occupied territories, or the avoidance of public criticism and inconsiderate argument in their church papers by providing for the adjustment of possible and probable differences at their

joint local conferences or Synodical meetings, but they aimed to establish a large central theological seminary with a faculty composed of members of all the Synods, at which all candidates for the holy ministry were at least to complete their studies. It was hoped that this uniform plan of education would serve to unite the Church through a unification of its ministry. Had it been possible to carry out this plan, the founding of a great Lutheran university in America would have been a comparatively easy undertaking. They also contemplated an organization of the Church into State Synods, uniting all faithful Lutherans of every State in the Union into one body and federating them into one great Lutheran Church in America. That this might mean the substitution of some other plan of organization for the constitution of the Missouri Synod was perfectly plain to Walther, who, at a Delegate Synod, held at St. Louis in 1878, where this matter was discussed, did not hesitate to openly and publicly say, *"Der Teufel had den Namen Missourish erfunden!"* ("The devil invented the name Missourian!") Since the father of lies, speaking through the enemies of the gospel, also invented the name "Christian" and "Lutheran," Walther undoubtedly cor-

rectly stated the truth. His remark is quoted to show the ardent and prayerful desire of this *Rechter Friedenstheolog* for the unity of the Church at any sacrifice, save only the sacrifice of the truth. When that was asked of him he had no choice as a humble, faithful pupil of Luther but to say, "Here I stand; I can do no other. God help me. Amen," and then let come what would.

Chapter 22

Lights and Shadows

When trying to paint a man's portrait in the Franz Hals manner with big swinging brush strokes, a point is sooner or later reached where it becomes necessary to pull the picture together with smaller strokes—a remark which may, perhaps, explain the heading of this chapter and excuse the brief notes of which it is composed.

In a letter to Doctor Sihler, dated March 17, 1849, after discussing arrangements for the third meeting of Synod, Walther says: "I am now often very much downcast; I feel almost nothing save my misery, and only seldom the grace and power of my God. Pray for miserable me." What chiefly troubled him, besides the controversy with Pastor Grabau and the Buffalo Synod, was this: "We must consider how a division of the Synod may be accomplished without its being split to pieces." The problem was not easy of solution. A Church which bases its unity entirely upon doctrinal agreement must of necessity provide for frequent meetings of its members to foster such agreement. There

is no other way to attain their "all speaking the same thing, being perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1:10). The new Synod was a little more than two years old. Its widely scattered members hardly knew each other. It was being most bitterly attacked by Pastor Grabau and his adherents. Pastor Loehe had published his "Aphorismen," and indicated his disapproval of Walther's and partial approval of Grabau's position. Not a few members of the Synod were Loehe's grateful pupils. Men of prominence in the home Church also questioned the wisdom of more than one provision of the Synod's constitution. Doctrinal clearness, especially as regards the position of our Church on the question of "Church and Office," was sadly lacking. There had been almost no opportunity for Walther, as President, to visit the congregations composing the Synod. Most of their members had never seen their leader. Now the suggestion was made to divide Synod. He recognizes that it cannot long be avoided or postponed. But the thought fills him with dread. No wonder he writes: "I am now very often downcast" (*gedrueckt*). Action was deferred by the adoption of a committee re-

port, written by Pastor Craemer, advising against the proposed division. Three years later, at Fort Wayne, in 1852, a division into four districts was resolved upon, subject, of course, to the approval of the congregations. These districts were organized as follows: The Western District (Missouri, Illinois and Iowa), with 37 parishes; the Middle District (Indiana, Ohio), with 36 parishes; the Northern District (Wisconsin, Michigan), with 14 parishes; the Eastern District (New York, Maryland, Pennsylvania), with 8 parishes. The necessary changes to the constitution were submitted and discussed; the whole matter considered again at Cleveland in 1853, and finally resolved upon and consummated at the eighth convention held at St. Louis in 1854. Pastor Friedrich Wyneken was elected General President, and Synod aranged to provide for his support by paying him a salary of $70 per month, and allowing him $140 for traveling expenses. He had been President of the Synod since 1850, when Walther was relieved of this office in order that he might, with entire singleness of purpose, devote himself to the upbuilding of Concordia College and Seminary and his editorial labors. The officers of the District Synods were elected, the time

for their annual meeting fixed, whereupon the *Allgemeine Synode* (General Synod) adjourned to meet after three years, having appointed Fort Wayne as the place, and the first Monday of October, 1857, as the time for its next meeting.

Dr. Sihler had been impressed by Walther's remarkable talent for organization when they met at St. Louis, in 1842, to discuss the draft of a constitution for the proposed Synod. The division of the Synod into districts necessitated important and far-reaching changes in the document adopted at Chicago in 1847. These changes and amendments, together with the amplifications and interpretations (*Weitere Bestimmungen*) adopted from time to time and collected in the "Synodical Manual" ("*Synodal-Handbuch*"), now constitute a very respectable body of what, for want of a better word, might be called ecclesiastical law. But the fundamental principles laid down in the Altenburg theses of 1841, first applied in the organization of the St. Louis congregation and later in the framing of Synod's constitution on the lines described by Walther in a letter to Pastor Ernst (Vol. I, p. 16), have stood the strain of seventy years of growth and development. That they should have

done so, is at once a testimony to their correctness and to the wonderful gifts of the man under whose leadersip they were thus applied and developed. Such was the impress of his spirit upon the Synod and its institutions, which at present counts twenty-two districts, that it to-day stands more firmly knit together in unity of faith and uniformity of practice than ever.

At the Synodical convention of 1850, the Chicago District Conference presented twelve questions for consideration, the tenth of which ran like this: "How far may and should a Lutheran minister occupy himself with the advancement of the American Bible Society, which is composed of members of all sects, if he himself desires to obtain benefits through it?" Synod replied: "As respects participation with the American Bible Societies, Synod holds that absolutely no cause for it exists, and that the Evangelical Lutheran Church is very well able to found a Bible Society of its own." Despite this boldness of speech, Synod did not say how this Lutheran Bible Society was to be founded. It tacitly left that to Walther, who, as usual, conferred with Trinity congregation, which, on April 24, 1853, organized a Bible Society and elected him its President.

Walther had a marvelous faculty for pressing every real man he met into service. Just as soon as this Bible Society, with its 250 members, had collected sufficient funds, we find him writing to his former opponent at the Altenburg Debate, Doctor Adolf Marbach, of Leipzig, requesting his assistance in arranging for the importation of Bibles from Germany. He had met him at his first visit to the fatherland, two years before. He wrote his wife how mutual reticence at their first meeting betrayed mutual mistrust, which was soon overcome, so that the old love was not only rekindled, but burned with a brighter and purer flame than ever before. Accordingly, we find him writing to the *Herr Kommissionsrat,* addressing him *"Teurer, in mein Herz eingeschlossoener Freund und Bruder,"* soliciting his interest and support for the Church in America. It was not denied him. Bibles were imported from the house of G. B. Teubner, Leipzig, through the intermediation of Doctor Marbach, and branches of the Lutheran Bible Society were established in the larger cities of the country. But Walther and the Bible Society did not stop there. They published the so-called "Altenburger Bibelwerk," a devotional work containing

Luther's version with his notes, glosses and prefaces, the summaries of Veit Dietrich, and the brief prayers of Franciscus Vierling. They also published the Holy Scriptures in several editions before the society, after Walther's death, turned over all its property, representing a value of $17,407, to Synod in 1887.

The eighth report of the proceedings of Synod has this note on its title page: "St. Louis, Mo., Printery of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio and other States, 1854." So the young Synod had a printery. The matter is explained by a note on page 15 of the report of 1855, where it is stated "that our General Synod has come into possession of a printery of its own through a non-interest bearing loan of $1000, made by Mr. A. Wiebusch, of St. Louis, which apparently will be self-supporting within a few years. The Synod expressed its gratification, and tendered its sincere thanks to Mr. Wiebusch." It then promptly proceeded to discuss the publication of a Church history, a number of tracts, a reprint of Walther's *Lutheraner* articles on the Lord's Supper, a new Book of Forms, etc.

It should have expressed its gratification and tendered its sincere thanks to Walther,

for it was he who had again pressed a man into service, and persuaded Mr. A. Wiebusch to launch this new undertaking. The 1857 report shows that it represented a value of $5000, and was in a position to print such important publications as the "Altenburger Bibelwerk" and the new "Agende." After passing through the usual struggles and vicissitudes, it finally grew into Concordia Publishing House, the largest Church-owned printing establishment in this country, which regularly issues an annual catalogue of nearly 600 pages. It was strong enough to carry to successful completion a critical reprint of the twenty-four great quarto volumes of Luther's collected writings. When it, acting for Synod, in 1887, took over the property and work of the Bible Society, it not only gave proof that "the Evangelical Lutheran Church is very well able to found a Bible Society of its own," but that, as stated in paragraph 3, Chapter I, of Synod's constitution, the entire Church, instead of leaving this work to an association of individual Christians, ought itself be such a society "for the united propagation of the gospel."

The outbreak of the Civil War and the struggles for the possession of St. Louis

and its arsenal, together with the State of Missouri, at that time debated ground, caused Walther most distressing anxieties and cares. The position of our Church on the slavery question, as stated by him in *Lehre und Wehre,* and his refusal to have part in the intemperate agitations of the Abolitionists, brought him the same measure of persecution that was meted out to Bishop John Henry Hopkins, of the Protestant Episcopal Church, whose "Scriptural, Ecclesiastical and Historical View of Slavery," still remains unanswered. The cries of the day, "Down with the Bible, if it maintains slavery," "It is high time to have an anti-slavery God and an anti-slavery Bible," could not fail to shock him as they shocked other earnest and God-fearing men. Being honest, he could not but say so, refusing to be "driven about by every wind of doctrine." The inevitable result was reviling and vituperation, the harder to bear because of the utter impossibility of making any effective reply. He was compelled to send his family to the country because it seemed that the college neighborhood would become the scene of a conflict between the troops of the federal government and the State militia. The college was closed and the students sent to their

homes. These events justified the gravest apprehensions, not merely for his personal safety (he seems never to have given that a thought), but for his family, and especially for the future of the Church. He writes of these things to his wife, to Pastor Lindemann, to Pastor Brunn, and to the St. Louis District Conference, in session at Collinsville, Ill. (Letters, Vol. I, pp. 162-171.)

This was after his return from Europe, where he had gone in the spring of 1860, to seek restoration of his health, broken down, at least in part, by the cares of his trying position during the dark days which preceded the great civil conflict.

The St. Louis convention of Synod, in October, 1860, had resolved to remove the "Practical Seminary" from Fort Wayne to St. Louis, combining it with the "Theoretical Seminary," and to remove the college, or gymnasium, from St. Louis to Fort Wayne in order to develop it as a separate institution. The resolution was carried out in the fall of 1861, after the institution, which had been closed in May, again began its work. The move was a happy one, and Walther writes to Schwan: "Although surrounded by reminders of bloody warfare, we here live in uninterrupted peace. Since Craemer's ad-

vent, blessing upon blessing is gushing forth unto us from every side. With him I am one heart and one soul; we are both reviving, except that I thereby daily become more sapless and powerless." (Letters, Vol. I, p. 171.) The two men labored together until 1875, when the "Practical Seminary" was removed to its present home at Springfield, Ill.

In the midst of the turmoil and agitations of the civil war, Walther's congregation and friends insisted upon celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of his ordination. Trinity congregation also erected a magnificent new church building, at a cost of $113,000, which was dedicated, without one cent of debt, on December 3 and 4, 1865. Walther preached at the first service, selecting the 87th Psalm for his text. His subject was, "The wonderful, miraculous edifice, God's Church on earth." "It is," he said, "(1) in appearance so weak, and yet it stands so immovably firm; (2) in appearance so poor, and yet it possesses such incomparable treasures; (3) in appearance so small, and yet it comprises such great, countless multitudes." Christ Protestant Episcopal Church, which had so generously extended its hospitality to the poor Saxon immigrants twenty-seven years before, again accepted the invitation to a special Sunday

evening service, at which Professor F. A. Schmidt preached on Rom. 1 : 16. The erection and dedication of this fine building was a source of great joy to Walther, who had shared the trials and griefs of Trinity congregation since he became its pastor in 1841.

At an extra session of Synod, held at Fort Wayne, in October, 1864, Wyneken insisted upon being relieved of the office of General President, which he had held since the division of Synod into districts in 1854. The Synod again turned to Walther and urged him to accept the election to this important office, although it was necessary to again modify the constitutional instructions defining his duties. Accordingly the General President was no longer required to visit individual congregations, but merely to act as general overseer of all general interests of the Church. His participation in the public doctrinal discussions (colloquium) with the Buffalo Synod, in 1866; with the Iowa Synod, in 1867; with the Ohio Synod, in 1868; with the Wisconsin Synod, in the same year; with the Illinois Synod, in 1869, together with other meetings preliminary to the organization of the Synodical Conference, have been described above. These meetings and debates, with the required preparation and cor-

respondence, besides his ordinary duties as professor, editor and President of Synod, represent an immense amount of labor, as well as a severe physical and mental strain, more than sufficient to break down any ordinary man. It is, therefore, not surprising that his throat trouble returned in 1869, and that he suffered from a severe attack of rheumatism in 1870. At Milwaukee, in 1873, where he was the guest of Pastor Lochner during a convention of the Northern District Synod, he broke down completely. A temporary loss of consciousness and memory were the threatening symptoms which prompted his physicians to insist that he at least moderate his activities and refrain from severe mental labors. He speaks of these trials with the simple faith of a child in a letter to his daughter Magdalene, quoting the words: *"Ach Gott, von dessen Brod ich zehr, wenn ich dir nur was nuetze waer."* He was prevented by his weakened condition from attending the second convention of the Synodical Conference in 1873, but after a brief rest he insisted upon taking part in the proceedings of the Middle District (August 13-19), and the Eastern District (August 27 to September 2), although he was unable to preach the sermons at the services with

which these conventions are always opened. It is apparent that his strength was beginning to break, and that the loving care of his wife and family did more to conserve his powers than all medicines. That he should spare himself for any length of time was not to be thought of, especially when there was the slightest hope of attaining his heart's great desire, "the final realization of one united Evangelical Lutheran Church of North America."

The general Synodical body met at St. Louis in 1872, just twenty-five years after its organization at Chicago in 1847. It now numbered 428 pastors and 251 parish school teachers. It had two theological seminaries, a teachers' seminary, a gymnasium, and a publishing house. Its founders and organizers were, for the most part, at the height of their powers. And so they counted this a "Jubilee Synod," held their sessions in a large public hall, and discussed the question: "What problems must we solve in order that the blessing which God had poured out upon us during the past twenty-five years may not be lost, but transmitted to our posterity?"

One answer was given by Walther's taking part in a free conference of English-speaking Lutherans, held at Gravelton, Mo., in 1872,

which led to the organization of the "English Lutheran Conference of Missouri," and, later, to the "English Synod of Missouri," which body was absorbed by the mother Synod at St. Louis, in 1912, and is now "the English District of the Missouri Synod." Plainly, it was his conviction that our fathers' faith was to be preached in our children's tongue. The Synod had early concerned itself with the so-called "language problem." In 1857 it laid down the principles which ought to obtain in connection with the "organization of English congregations out of German mother congregations." It had delegated Professor Walther and Pastor Schwan to adjust the differences between the German congregation of Pastor Keyl and the first St. Peter's congregation of Baltimore. It had appointed delegates to the Tennessee Synod, an English body, in 1853 and 1854. But it remained for Walther to give the English work of the Synod direction and form, by organizing a purely English Conference in the Ozark Mountains of Missouri.

The "Jubilee Synod" of 1872, recognizing the impossibility of meeting with a full attendance of pastors and lay delegates, arranged for delegate representation by directing that groups of two to seven congrega-

tions are entitled to send one clerical and one lay delegate, while groups of two to seven advisory members are also entitled to a delegate at the conventions. This somewhat unwieldy plan for the election of delegates is in vogue to this day, and the term *"Delegatensynode,"* has supplanted the term, *"Allgemeine Synode,"* for the triennial meetings of the general Church body. At the first "Delegate Synod," held at Fort Wayne, in 1874, Walther asked to be relieved of the office of General President, a request which Synod declined to consider, although it again revised the constitutional instructions pertaining to this office, so as to lighten the burden of duties imposed upon its chief executive officer. This constitution is unquestionably a very flexible document, capable of almost unlimited amendment, which simply means that it laid down correct principles and left their application and interpretation to the requirements of future needs.

In June, 1875, Concordia College celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of its foundation. The little log cabin school, established by faith "at the settlement of the German Lutherans in Perry County, Mo., near the Obrazo," since its removal to St. Louis had grown and prospered under the

fostering care of Professor Walther and his associates. His services to the great cause of Christian education were publicly recognized by the Church when Capitol University, of Columbus, Ohio, conferred the degree of Doctor of Divinity upon him in January, 1878. This honor had been offered him by the theological faculty of the University of Goettingen, in 1855, in a most flattering letter signed by the Dean "Herr Konsistorialrath und Professor der Theologie, Doktor J. G. Reiche." After conferring with his brethren, Walther courteously but positively declined to accept the proffered honor. His reasons for taking this position appear from letters written to his intimate friends, the Pastors Fick and Schieferdecker. On the one hand he held himself to be unworthy of this high honor; on the other, he did not care to accept it at the hands of any but a staunchly Lutheran faculty. One hardly knows which to admire most, his almost excessive modesty, or his uncompromising insistence upon purity of faith.

When the same honor was offered him by the Joint Synod of Ohio, at that time part of the Synodical Conference, he felt himself constrained to accept, and the degree was formally conferred with appropriate cere-

monies at the St. Louis Seminary, on January 25, 1878. Guenther quotes his address of acceptance and his letter of thanks to the Chicago Pastoral Conference, which had sent its congratulations in verse form. Both are a testimony to his entire lack of self-appreciation and to his high regard for the inestimable privilege of being with men like Luther, Chemnitz and Gerhard, publicly acclaimed a "Teacher of Teachers" in the Church of the pure word and unadulterated sacraments. The congratulations which came to him from every side were publicly acknowledged in the *Lutheraner*.

At the second "Delegate Synod," held in May, 1878, Walther again begged to be relieved of the office of "General President" in the interest of his work as professor at the seminary and many other duties. Synod, unable to refute his arguments, most reluctantly granted his request, expressing the wish and the hope that he might, whenever possible, visit the conventions of District Synods so that the Church might profit through his gifts.

In 1880, at the 300th anniversary of the acceptance of the Book of Concord, and the 350th anniversary of the presentation of the Augsburg Confession, Walther contributed

to the celebration by writing his "Der Koncordienformel Kern und Stern," a reprint of the Epitome, with a historical introduction and explanatory notes. In view of the approaching 400th anniversary of the Reformation, a remark of Guenther's is worth quoting. He says that Walther was privileged to celebrate the 300th anniversary of Luther's death in 1846; the 300th anniversary of the Religious Peace of Augsburg in 1855; the 350th anniversary of the Reformation in 1867; the 300th anniversary of the Form of Concord in 1877, as well as the double anniversary mentioned above. "He not only took part in these celebrations, but knew how to inspire others, gave most valuable guidance (*Anleitung*) for the ordering of the celebrations, and showed the deep significance of these festivals"—setting us an example for enthusiastic imitation to-day.

Chapter 23

The Predestination Controversy

In his letter of thanks to the Chicago Pastoral Conference, which had sent him a congratulatory poem on his having been honored with the degree "Doctor of Divinity," Walther said: "The circle, in which I have hitherto lived, consists in this that God soon humbled, soon exalted me; so that I always knew when an exaltation came that a deep humiliation would promptly follow." What he does not say is this: God at times employs the same means for our humiliation that were used for our exaltation, and *vice versa.* He at times casts down by the same means He employed to lift up. It was, therefore, not at all surprising that the same men who, in 1878, publicly lifted up Walther to be a Doctor of Theology, a "Teacher of Teachers" in the faithful Lutheran Church, within two years afterwards just as publicly charged him with heresy. It was not surprising, but it hurt. A blow always hurts, but the hurt is doubled when it is preceded by a caress. It is more than doubled when the same hand

does both, caresses and strikes. The pain and grief caused Walther by the unfortunate predestination controversy of 1880, with its divisions and offences, will, perhaps, never be fully told. It shattered some of his fondest hopes, and, so far as may be seen by human eyes, threw back the development of the Church for years. The dreams of the men who at the organization of the Synodical Conference saw one great Lutheran Church of America organized by states, supporting a great central Lutheran Seminary, with a German-English-Scandinavian faculty, which might have grown into a great Lutheran university, like most other dreams, vanished in a moment. At the time they seemed very real. Walther, in a letter to his friend, Ottesen, expresses the wish that he might labor at his side as professor of theology, and incidentally teases him a little by suggesting that he might give private instructions to the faculty in refined manners (Vol. II, p. 227). It was not to be. How this bitter disappointment affected Walther will, perhaps, appear from his letters written during the period. The present second volume closes with 1871. Fortunately, the publication of other and later letters is promised.

It is manifestly impossible in this brief

chapter to present any full discussion of the controversy and the questions of doctrine it involved. Books have been written on it. It is still the subject of discussion at intersynodical meetings and conferences. One can hardly do more than attempt a brief account of Walther's connection with the painful strife together with its effect upon him and his work.

And here one can best begin by gratefully quoting from Doctor Krauth's "Conservative Reformation": "The life of a Church may be largely read in its controversies. As the glory or shame of a nation is read upon its battlefields which tell for what it perilled the lives of its sons, so may the glory or shame of a Church be determined when we know what it fought for and what it fought against; how much it valued what it believed to be the truth; what was the truth it valued; how much it did, and how much it suffered to maintain that truth, and what was the issue of its struggles and sacrifices. . . . A Church which contends for nothing, either has lost the truth, or has ceased to love it" (p. 147). These words apply to an individual teacher of the Church as to the Church itself. We may, therefore, apply them to Walther and his position in the controversy on the doc-

trine of predestination and the related doctrine of conversion. It is impossible to follow Hochstetter's account of this controversy. His history of the Missouri Synod was written in 1885, when the engendered bitterness was at its height. While he makes no misstatements of fact, he does ascribe and impugn motives. Guenther is far more charitable. For him the controversy is deplorable, because of the divisions and offences it wrought; on the other hand, beneficial, because through it many souls were healed of the error of synergism, and led to give God all glory for their salvation. He briefly and objectively discusses Walther's writings on the debated doctrines, and closes his chapter by quoting several of his letters written to friends during this period. We shall fare best if we follow his example.

The most elaborate presentation of the subject from the viewpoint of the Ohio Synod is a book published in 1897, by Pastor E. L. S. Tressel, under the somewhat ponderous title, "The Error of Modern Missouri: Its Inception, Development and Refutation." It contains translations of lengthy papers by Doctor F. W. Stellhorn, Doctor F. A. Schmidt, and "several former members of the Missouri Synod," the most prominent of

which were the Pastors Allwardt, Doermann and Ernst. The most simple and convincing presentation in English from the viewpoint of Missouri is a tract by the recently deceased Pastor F. Kuegele, entitled, "Sermons on Predestination, with a Few Remarks on the Eight Points." It was privately published in 1881, and is now, unfortunately, out of print.

In the doctrinal discussions, which are such an important feature of all conventions of the Missouri Synod, the Western District, under Walther's leadership, had for years discussed the theme: "Only through the doctrine of the Lutheran Church is God alone given all glory, an irrefutable proof that its doctrine is the only true one." This was elaborated from year to year with reference to the various fundamental doctrines of the Church. In 1877 the doctrine of predestination was discussed upon the basis of theses taken verbatim from the Form of Concord. Thesis III states: "The Lutheran Church teaches that it is false and wrong to teach that not the mercy of God and the most holy merits of Christ alone, but that in us also there is a cause of the election of God for the sake of which God has elected us unto eternal life." A comparison of this state-

ment with the XI Article of the Epitome, which says, "We know how we are elected to eternal life in Christ, through pure grace without any of our merit," is sufficient, if proof were needed, to show its correctness. Moreover, the Eleventh Article also emphatically says: "The predestination, or eternal election of God, pertains alone to the good and beloved children of God; and it is a cause of their salvation, which He also procures, and orders that which belongs to it. Upon this their salvation is so firmly founded, that the gates of hell cannot prevail against them (John 10:28; Matt. 16:18)."

It is apparent that this statement, unless it be received with simple faith, may give rise to endless subtle questions. The Form of Concord recognizes this and wards them off by insisting that "This predestination of God is not to be sought in God's secret counsel, but in the word of God, in which it is revealed"; "We should, therefore, not judge concerning this election to eternal life, either from our reason, or from the law of God"; "The true sentiment concerning predestination must be derived from the holy gospel of Christ alone"; "We must banish from our minds other thoughts which flow not from God, but from the insinuations of the malev-

olent enemy," etc. Plainly, the Confession is urging that in discussing this article we confine ourselves to plain statements of Scripture and be on our guard against deductions and conclusions "from our reason or from the law of God"—a position taken by Walther on this, as on all other doctrines. Consequently he refused to accept as "an unfortunately selected terminology" of the faithful dogmaticians of the seventeenth century, a term invented by Aegidius Hunnius, namely, that "God elected in view of faith" (*"intuitu fidei"*). He insisted, and Synod with him, that "God indeed has elected only those who believe, but not because they believe." Accordingly, the statement is made, on page 51 of the famous Western District report of 1877: "God foresaw nothing, absolutely nothing in those whom He resolved to save which might be worthy of salvation, and even if it be admitted, that He foresaw some good in them, this still could not have determined Him to elect them for that reason, for all good in man first comes from Him, as the Scriptures teach." Certainly it cannot be denied that Walther and the Missourians were concerned to give all glory to God and none to man.

These statements were attacked by Pro-

fessor F. A. Schmidt, a catechumen and student of Walther, and a former pastor of the Missouri Synod, at that time professor of the Theological Seminary of the Norwegian Synod at Madison, Wis. He had been pastor of the first St. Peter's English congregation at Baltimore, and left it at the outbreak of the Civil War to accept a professorship offered by the Norwegian Synod. He had also been prominently mentioned as a possible theological professor for Concordia, St. Louis. In January, 1880, he published a new theological magazine, *Altes und Neues* (*Old and New*), in which he declared that he must sound the alarm against the new Cryptocalvinism of Missouri, as expressed in the Synodical report of the Western District of 1877. This publication had been preceded by a private correspondence with Walther and others. The General President of the Missouri Synod, Pastor Schwan, had vainly invited Professor Schmidt and his brother-in-law, Pastor Allwardt, to a conference with President Fuerbringer in July, 1879. Moreover, appeal was made to the Synodical Conference agreement, according to which its members were pledged, in case of any difference, to make no public accusation or attack against each other

before every means of adjusting such differences had been exhausted. This appeal was also in vain. Professor Schmidt printed his magazine and published his charges, directing them primarily against Walther. In passing, it must be noted that similar charges had been made by Professor G. Fritschel, of the Iowa Synod, to which Walther had replied through *Lehre und Wehre*, in 1872. Walther carefully refrained from making any direct personal reply to the attacks of Professor Schmidt, a member of the household of faith. Instead, the "Missourians" appealed to the President of the Synodical Conference, Professor Lehmann, of Columbus, Ohio, urging that an effort be made to prevent the threatening conflict through an extra convention of that body. Professor Lehmann took the position that he was not authorized to call such a meeting. After his death, on December 1, 1880, almost a full year after the first number of *Altes und Neues* had appeared, Profesor Larsen, the Vice-President, arranged for a gathering of all theological faculties within the Synodical Conference, at Milwaukee, January 5, 1881. After five days of fruitless debate, the representatives of the Ohio Synod withdrew, declaring themselves to be unable, because of

certain reasons, to remain in further attendance. A motion to meet again within a year, while refraining from all public polemics, failed to prevail. Professor Schmidt declared himself to be commanded of God to wage this war, whereupon Walther declared, "So be it. You wish war; you shall have war." The conflict was on.

Meanwhile a general pastoral conference of all ministers of the Missouri Synod had been held in Chicago. It convened in the church of Pastor Wagner, on September 29, 1880, and was attended by 500 pastors from all parts of the country. Since nothing had been done by the Synodical Conference to prevent the threatening breach or restore disrupted relations, Walther and his co-laborers felt it incumbent upon them to do all in their power to strengthen and fortify the ministerium of Synod, especially since there was talk of "the whole colossus of the Missouri Synod breaking into a thousand pieces," which simply meant that the work of a lifetime was to be undone. Walther led the discussions at this conference, which remained in session until October 5. Another was held at Fort Wayne the following year, May 23 and 24, 1881. Stenographic reports of the proceedings at

both of these important gatherings have been printed. At the Fort Wayne convention of the Delegate Synod, May 11-21, 1881, the thirteen theses or propositions published by Walther in Volume 36 of the *Lutheraner* (1880, Nos. 2-9), were adopted as a public statement of faith on the debated questions. They are quoted by Doctor Neve in his "Brief History of the Lutheran Church in America." This convention also instructed its delegates to the sessions of the Synodical Conference "not to sit together and deliberate with such as have publicly decried us as Calvinists," and "not to recognize any Synod which as a Synod has raised the same accusation of *Calvinisterei* against us."

These resolutions were undoubtedly invited by the publication, in February, 1881, of the *Columbus Theological Magazine,* a new theological monthly edited by Professor M. Loy. The titles of its two leading articles, "The Burning Question" and "Missouri Retractions," sufficiently indicate its character and tendency. The Ohio Synod met in extra session at Wheeling, W. Va., in September of the same year, and resolved to withdraw from the Synodical Conference; first, because it could not accept Missouri's doctrine of predestination, and, secondly, be-

cause of the above instructions given its delegates by the Missouri Synod at its Fort Wayne convention. The vote on withdrawal was 119 to 19. The die was cast, and the controversy which followed was exceedingly bitter. Pastors and congregrations withdrew from the Ohio Synod to join the Missouri; pastors and congregations of the Missouri Synod withdrew to join the Ohio Synod. Not only congregations, but families and households were divided, the husband communing at one church, the wife at another. The inevitable setting up of opposition altars, not only in cities and towns but in country missionary districts, went on apace. The polemical theological literature of the Church was enormously increased. The zeal of both bodies for the great, pressing work of home missions was wonderfully stimulated. While in some cases a "Christ of contention," rather than a "Christ of love," may have been preached, we have gotten far enough away from the personalities of those days to say with Paul: "What then? Notwithstanding every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice" (Phil. 1:18). Instead of retarding the growth and development of either Synod, the contro-

versy seems to have stimulated and accelerated it. In the decade, 1878-1888, the Missouri Synod almost doubled the number of its pastors.

On the side of doctrine there was also a great gain. The congregations were "enriched in all utterance and in all knowledge, even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in them" (1 Cor. 1:5, 6). Ordinary laymen kept and studied *Lehre und Wehre,* besides reading and discussing the pamphlets and brochures put forth by Walther. A spirit of deep earnestness, which expressed itself in unremitting effort to "hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering," and a striving after assurance of faith and holiness of living, pervaded the congregations. Pastors and laymen together searched the Scriptures and the Confessions. Nor did they take anything for granted. The following incident actually occurred: A simple fish peddler in a Detroit congregation asked his pastor if our Lord's words, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand" (Job 10:27, 28), were spoken of the elect or of temporary believers. When the pastor said,

"Of temporary believers" (*Von den Zeitglaubigen*), he immediately replied, "So; now I have enough. Now I know that I must follow Doctor Walther, and not you." A "Missourian" may be pardoned for holding that when all is said and done the Lutheran Church of this country will follow the example of the fish peddler rather than that set by men who imagine they can give all glory to God while insisting that "in a certain respect conversion and salvation depend also upon man, and not alone upon God"—the more so when we remember that even the opponents of the Missouri Synod admit that they can accept Walther's "Thirteen Theses."

How the painful controversy affected Walther will best appear if we quote from several of his letters. On March 29, 1881, he writes to a layman, who had urged him to give up his Calvinistic errors. After thanking him for his letter, he goes on to say: "Do not imagine that I am only a *Kopfgelehrter* (a man of head learning). Fifty years ago, by God's grace, I came through long and severe anxiety of soul to a knowledge of my sinful misery, and hereupon through God's word and Holy Spirit, to a living knowledge of my Saviour. And now,

since the deplorable predestination controversy has arisen, I cry and plead day and night upon my knees to God, that He will not suffer me to fall into error, but make me to know the truth and keep me in it until my end, which is not far removed, for I am in my seventieth year. But God makes me more and more certain that the doctrine which I confess is right. For it stands in God's word and in the precious Confession of our faithful Church."

On June 15, 1880, he writes to his friend, the Senior Pastor Buerger: "I, too, am glad to know that you do not believe the report that I in one point have already given in. Gladly would I do so, if God's word permitted it and peace might thereby be purchased, but so far nothing brought forth against our doctrine has been able to convince me of an error. My conscience is bound in God's word; to do anything against that, however, is 'neither safe nor prudent,' as Luther said at Worms.

"Unto death, for which I greatly long,
"Yours, WALTHER."

On March 5, 1881, he writes to another friend: "The free grace of God in Christ is at present, as you will understand, the matter which occupies me day and night. The

controversy which has arisen on the doctrine of predestination forces me to it. 'So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy' (Rom. 9:16); these are the words which constantly ring in the ear of my soul and which God lays upon my heart as an iron breastplate, from which all shafts of speculative reason, which my opponents fire at me, rebound. They so completely agree with my own experience."

Under date of March 8, 1884, he writes the same friend: "That I belong to the brethren of the Lord and even to the 'most lowly,' this I certainly venture to believe upon Christ's Saviour love; despite this, that I from the bottom of my soul do not consider myself worthy to be called the shoe clout of the feet of Christ, the Lord of glory, and despite this that just now, more than ever, they hate me and separate me and reproach me and cast out my name as evil (Luke 6:22), for I have this good confidence, that it is done only 'for the Son of man's sake,' not because I am actually a heretical Calvinist, but because I desire to leave glory alone, altogether alone, to my Lord Jesus, namely, to leave this glory, that it is His grace and mercy alone when a lost

sinner is found, converted and finally saved, while he who is not found is not lost because God did not seek him, but alone because he would not suffer himself to be found."

That a former pupil should have inaugurated this controversy, and that other pupils should have associated themselves with him in attacks which were by no means free from personalities, and that the hope of disrupting the great Church body he had organized should have been publicly expressed—these things were inexpressibly bitter to him, and the harder to bear because of his failing health and strength. He did not often complain of them, but reference to his approaching end and an ardent desire to be delivered from the body of this death, become more and more frequent in his letters and conversation. He had not long to wait. But while life remained, he labored for the great principle of his every thought and activity, "*Soli Deo Gloria*" (To God alone be glory!)

Chapter 24

Closing Days

In the *Lutheraner* of June 15, 1881, Walther published an "Appeal to all members of our Synod Congregations," asking for free-will offerings to erect a new seminary building upon the site occupied by the building erected when the institution was removed from its Perry County log cabin home to St. Louis. This new building was planned to have a front of 225 feet and a depth of 95 feet, with sixty rooms for students, a chapel and assembly hall, a library and reading-room and eight lecture-rooms. It was to be built of brick, with stone trimmings, and to cost $100,000. It is significant that the Synod directed Walther, the President of the institution, to make this appeal, and not its chief executive officer, the *Allgemeiner Praeses,* Pastor Schwan. Walther was still its leader in all larger undertakings. At the convention of Synod the question had been raised if it was not advisable to postpone the building of the new seminary until the doctrinal controversy disquieting the congregations had been allayed. Walther answers

this by pointing to two things: First, that the condition described in Acts 9:31, "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified," ordinarily obtains but seldom and for a brief time; and secondly, the history of the Church shows that the Church just in periods of hottest conflict performed the most magnificent works which called for the greatest sacrifices on her part. He illustrates this with the example of the Reformation Church, and urges, while the present conflict is no child's play, it is, after all, but a small thing compared with the struggles endured by the Church 300 or 350 years before. Following the example of our pious forefathers, we dare not neglect the works of peace in days of strife. He then goes on to appeal to the "insight, the goodwill and the love" of the members of Synod's congregations, pointing to the blessings which God in the past thirty-four years had graciously and abundantly poured out upon His Church, and the responsibilities devolving upon it through the immigration so largely composed of its children pouring into the great Middle West.

The response was prompt and generous. Although the building cost $140,000, instead of $100,000, as originally estimated, when

Delegate Synod convened at St. Louis, in 1884, almost the entire amount had been provided for. The dedication exercises, on September 9, 1883, a few weeks before the 400th anniversary of Luther's birth, were attended by a great congregation of 20,000 people, 160 pastors, graduates of the seminary, representatives of all Synodical Conference colleges, officers of District Synods, etc. Of course, Walther, who had laid the corner-stone on October 1, 1882, held the festival address. The festivities lasted for several days. True to the many-tongued character of the Church, the program was made up of German, English and Latin hymns and addresses. Of course, the Gast Lithograph Company prepared a lithograph of the building, the vivid reds and bright greens of which, in an appropriate frame, decorated the front rooms of most Missouri Synod farm houses. Walther had spoken of it as being a monument to the love and mercy of God and the generous gratitude of His Christians. The people were proud of their monument, and it is not surprising that a picture of the college, together with a stiff Wehle portrait of Martin Luther, a copy of the Altenburg Bible, a *Gebetschatz,* and a volume of Walther's sermons were held

to be indispensable articles in every properly furnished Lutheran home.

In 1882 and 1883 two other appeals appeared in the *Lutheraner,* namely, appeals for students to prepare for the holy ministry. They were written by Pastor Otto Hanser, of Trinity congregation, St. Louis, a member of the College *Aufsichtsbehoerde,* or Board of Trustees. In 1881 complaint had been voiced because "so few young people are to be found who are inclined to enter our institutions to prepare for the ministry of the word and sacraments." The reference was to the "Practical Seminary" at Springfield. In his appeal Pastor Hanser spoke of all the educational institutions of Synod. He headed it, "A Cry for Help in Great Need." He introduces it with the statement that no appeal was ever made through the *Lutheraner* which did not find immediate and willing response. He was right, for the number of students at the institutions of Synod, especially at Springfield, promptly doubled. At the "Practical Seminary," in 1883, tents rented from the State militia were pitched on the college campus to accommodate students until provision could be made for their proper housing. The Milwaukee congregations founded a new Concordia Gymnasium

in 1881, which soon threatened to rival the original Concordia at Fort Wayne. Its first building was dedicated January 3, 1883. A similar institution for the East was founded by the New York congregations, under the leadership of Pastor Siecker and old St. Matthew's, which, through the self-sacrificing labors of Pastor Koepchen, of St. Luke's, and Pastor Schoenfeld, of Immanuel's, has since been developed into the splendid institution at Bronxville, Greater New York. What Walther had said of the Church performing its most magnificent works and bringing the greatest sacrifices in periods of hottest trial and conflict, was coming true.

The Synod also began to energetically direct its attention to the establishment of English congregations, a work which the Synodical Conference had hitherto been inclined to leave to the Ohio Synod. The Western District created a Board to take charge of this work in 1880, which, in 1882, called Pastor A. Baepler as its traveling missionary, and appealed for funds to the congregations of Synod. The Board was far from recognizing the need of making provision for the younger members of Synod's city congregations who might be better served by English than by German preaching, but the machin-

ery for its support and guidance was provided, to be effectively used when the need appeared. The *Lutheran Witness,* a "new English Lutheran Family Paper," was issued by Pastor C. A. Frank, of Zanesville, Ohio, in 1882. Walther warmly welcomes it in the *Lutheraner*, of June 1, encourages the undertaking, and asks all "who understand Engglish" to promptly become its subscribers. The work begun at Baltimore, in Wyneken's time, and interrupted when Pastor F. A. Schmidt left the first St. Peter's to go to Madison, Wis., at the outbreak of the war, was again taken up under Walther's inspiration and direction. Thus Walther had the joy of seeing Synod "lengthen its cords and strengthen its stakes" in every direction. When Delegate Synod convened at St. Louis, May 7, 1884, the General President, Pastor Schwan, selected Ps. 126:3, "The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad," for the text of his opening address. Three years before, at Fort Wayne, May 11, 1881, he had: "My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. 12:9). As the outcome showed, the words were almost prophetic.

The Synodical Conference convened for

its ninth convention at Chicago, October 4, 1882. The report of the *Lutheraner* speaks of the "anxious fears" (*"bange Befuerchtungen"*) with which the delegates traveled to the place of meeting. Professor F. A. Schmidt appeared as lay delegate of a Conference of the Norwegian Synod. The Missouri Synod delegates protested against his being seated as a member of the convention, presenting a document prepared by Walther and privately discussed by them on October 3. Similar protests were made in behalf of the Wisconsin and Minnesota Synods. The delegates of the Norwegian Synod were divided. The result of the lengthy discussions was the refusal on the part of the Synods represented to grant Professor Schmidt seat and voice before he admitted that he hastily and without the necessary negotiations and steps had accused the Synodical Conference of Calvinism and broken into its congregations, causing divisions and offences. He was directly asked if he came as a friend or opponent of the Conference. Upon his failure to give direct answer to these pertinent questions, the assembled delegates refused him the desired recognition.

Although the majority of the pastors of

the Norwegian Synod inclined to the doctrine on predestination and conversion confessed by the Synodical Conference, the Norwegians, nevertheless, withdrew from formal connection with that body in order that they might the more readily deal with any difficulties arising in their midst. This step, however, did not prevent a breach, for Professor Schmidt withdrew, in 1887, with a considerable following, to organize "the United Norwegian Lutheran Church."

Walther led the doctrinal discussions at the convention of the Synodical Conference held at Cleveland, Ohio, August 13-18, 1884. He visited the Detroit convention, August 11-16, 1886, on his way home from Cleveland, where he had attended the sessions of the Middle District, assembled August 4-10, in the church of his son-in-law, Pastor J. Niemann. He had previously visited, as he said, for the last time, his children in New York, where the entire Pastoral Conference of the city assembled to greet him and spend a few hours in his company. He was far from well at the time, and he sorely missed the companionship and loving care of his devoted wife, who had entered into her rest August 23, 1885. Still, he managed to lead the doctrinal discussions at the sessions of

the Western District, assembled at St. Louis, October 13-19, 1886. He there completed a work, begun thirteen years before, to which reference has more than once been made in this story of his life. Guenther, who was present at the sessions, describes how he, weakened by fever, summoned all his powers to carry his self-imposed task to successful completion, and finally, deeply moved and with sobs, closed: "Now we are at an end with our theses discussed during the past thirteen years, in which it was shown that our Lutheran Church in all of these doctrines gives all glory to God and never ascribes to the creature the glory which belongs to the great God. What belongs to God she also gives Him fully. Now may the dear Lord help, that we not alone rejoice to belong to such a Church, but that we, too, may give Him all glory through our faith, confession, life, suffering and death. The motto of our life must be, *'Soli Deo Gloria!'* " It was, Guenther truthfully says, the motto of his life, and it was wonderfully fitting that it should be his last public utterance before glorifying his God through a Christian death.

Soon his condition became worse. Still he continued his lectures at the seminary, although he was urged to spare himself. On

October 25, he celebrated his seventy-fifth birthday, receiving his fellow-professors, relatives and friends, who gathered at his home after their usual custom, with his wonted courtesy and friendliness. On Wednesday, November 3, he attended the local Pastoral Conference. In the evening he consented, upon representations made by the College Board of Trustees, to discontinue his lectures. In December his daughter "Lenchen" came from New York to nurse him. He was privileged to celebrate Christmas in her company, and with all Christendom once more to join his weak *"Soli Deo Gloria!"* with the hosts of heaven, who sang the first "Glory be to God on high!" at the Saviour's birth.

On January 16, 1887, the second Sunday after Epiphany, he celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of his ordination. What a wonderful fifty years they had been! An appropriate celebration had long been considered, but in his weakened condition any larger function was not to be thought of. Still, the student body gathered at his home in the early morning to greet him with song and offer their congratulations; appropriate sermons were preached in the local churches; representatives of Synod, the faculty, and the con-

gregations waited on him to give expression to their regard and esteem. Congratulatory letters and telegrams came from every part of the country. Walther received the various delegations sitting in an invalid chair, and toward the end, while struggling to express his thanks, he broke down completely. A letter dictated to his son, Pastor Ferdinand Walther, and published in the *Lutheraner* (Vol. 43, No. 3), gives wider, if not fuller, expression to the feelings which filled his heart.

In this letter he describes his illness as "a complete absorption of all bodily powers," which prevents his walking three steps unaided, and even when supported by others the attempt to walk ten steps robs him of his breath and almost induces a fainting spell. That was January 17. He lingered, gradually losing strength, until the time came for Delegate Synod to convene at Fort Wayne, on May 4. In his opening address President Schwan made most touching reference to Walther's condition and the futility of hoping for any improvement. "We must," he said, "make up our minds that the next moment may bring us the news of his departing." The news came on the evening of Saturday, May 7. Pastor Stoeckhardt had

remained at St. Louis to be with him. On Friday night, after praying with him at his request, Pastor Stoeckhardt asked a question similar to that asked of Luther on the night of his death by his friends, Jonas and Coelius, to which the dying hero of the faith answered with an audible "Yes." Stoeckhardt asked Walther if he stood ready to cheerfully die upon the grace of Christ, which he had proclaimed all his life? to which question Walther, too, answered with an audible "Yes." He lingered, seemingly without pain, pitiably weak, yet fully conscious, until 5.30 Saturday evening, when he quietly and peacefuly fell asleep in his Lord.

At the request of Synod the funeral services were postponed until May 17, in order that the pastors and delegates might attend. Synod continued and closed its sessions in St. Paul's Church, which was draped in black by the Fort Wayne congregations. On Friday, May 13, the body of their beloved teacher was borne from Walther's residence by eight students to the seminary, where it lay in state under student guard until Sunday afternoon, when it was taken to Trinity Church to await its interment on Tuesday. At the funeral services President Schwan preached on the 90th Psalm, Professor Crae-

mer spoke on 2 Kings 2: 12, and Pastor Otto Hanser, at the grave, on Dan. 12: 2, 3. Professor Larsen also spoke in behalf of the Norwegian Synod. All the Synods of the Synodical Conference had sent representatives, and Guenther remarks: "At no funeral services of a theologian in America did so many theologians take part. The city of St. Louis has hardly seen a larger funeral." "Walther was verily carried to his grave like a prince and great one of the kingdom of God," says Hanser. As the funeral procession, on its way to Trinity Cemetery, passed the seminary, his beloved Concordia, it stopped for a silent, solemn moment at the scene of his earthly labors for the upbuilding unto true concord and unity of the faithful Lutheran Church of America. His mortal body was laid in its last resting place at the side of his beloved wife, to await the resurrection unto glory at the coming of the Lord. A gothic mausoleum, with a life-sized statue of Walther, was placed over the two graves by the St. Louis congregation and his friends. It was dedicated with a simple service on June 12, 1892. True, he did not need this memorial to be remembered, for "the memory of the just is blessed." Even as it is written: "Blessed are the dead which die in

the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them." Having been erected, one cannot but wish that room had been found to place upon its granite walls in letters of imperishable bronze, the motto of his life, the thought which inspired his every word and deed:

"Soli Deo Gloria!"

Chapter 25

The Theologian

The Book of Books, which may not incorrectly be called a collection of biographies, because God teaches men through the experience of other men, never presents what we call a character study or a character analysis. It quietly and simply tells the story of a man's life and words and deeds, and then leaves it to us to draw conclusions and make applications, which is the more easy because it never hides his weaknesses nor covers up his shortcomings. One is tempted to do the same thing and close this book with the account of Walther's death.

But so much would remain unsaid. The necessity is apparent of saying something of Walther as a preacher, as a pastor, as a professor, as an editor and writer, as a missionary, as a friend and companion; of his relations with other men of eminence in the kingdom of God; of his theological studies and position; of his writings, which would include not merely his books, but the many articles scattered in the various publications of the Missouri Synod. These should some

day be collected and published in one complete edition of his works. A chapter might readily be devoted to each of these subjects. But it would carry us too far. We must content ourselves with a few brief notes. They will suffice to show that Walther with right was carried to his grave "as a prince and great one in the kingdom of God." And here the tributes which his biographer, Guenther, collected with such affectionate care, besides his published letters, will again be of great help.

"Walther," Guenther says, "was a great theologian." He might have said that it is difficult or impossible to think of him as being anything else. Just as theology to him "is a wisdom from on high" (*"eine Weisheit von oben her"*)—we are quoting from a splendid article on "Doctor C. F. W. Walther as a Theologian," written by his grateful pupil, Doctor Franz Piper, and printed in *Lehre und Wehre,* 1888—so Walther himself is a theologian *"von ober her"*—a true *Gottesgelehrter* (a man "taught of God"). "The Holy Spirit alone makes D.Ds.," remarks Walther with reference to a saying of Luther's, who so sharply distinguishes between the creation of "Doctor of Holy Scriptures" and "Doctors of

Science, of Medicine, of Laws," etc. Doctor Piper then goes on to apply and illustrate Luther's famous axiom, *"Oratio, Meditatio, Tentatio Faciunt Theologum,"* with quotations from his personal experience. Walther, he says, first makes the point that only a sincere Christian can be a true theologian, that an unconverted man may, at the most, be "a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal." He then warns against the abuse of this truth, which prompts some sects to despise all learning. He insists upon diligent effort to acquire the most thorough theological training. He agrees with Melanchthon, who said, "An unlearned theology is an Ilias of evils." He urges that men like Chemnitz, Gerhard, Calov, aye, Luther himself, became great theologians not through their great natural gifts, but through their unflagging diligence and unremitting application. Still, he refuses to overestimate mere intellectual and scientific training. Theology to him is more than a science, a *Wissenschaft.* It is a divinely wrought "habitus," a practical ability and capability to do one certain thing, namely, by the teaching and preaching of the Holy Scriptures to make fallen, sinful men wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. Ac-

cordingly, the true theologian is absolutely dependent upon the inspired word of God. It is for him to say, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth," and, having heard, to speak to others.

These few sentences are far from being a synopsis of Doctor Piper's splendid article, but they will suffice to help us form an estimate of Walther as a theologian.

He was a sincere, earnest Christian, a man who knowing himself to be a lost and condemned sinner, rested all his hope of salvation upon Jesus Christ, his Saviour. The living faith which saved him from despair during his student days at Leipzig, remained the sheet anchor of his soul. He never lost it. It is always in evidence. It shows itself even in such little things as the close of his letters, where he writes, "Your most humble fellow in trial and the kingdom," "Yours, longing for everlasting life," "Your closely united brother in Him who loved us unto death and is now seated on the throne to pour out upon us the blessings He has gained," "Your friend and brother in the Lord Jesus," "Your faithful father and intercessor with God." The fruits of the Spirit, the chief of which is faith, show themselves in what we ordinarily call little things, "love, joy,

peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, temperance." One must be rather intimately associated with a man to see them. All of Walther's associates testify to his spirituality and high-minded Christian character.

He was a man of prayer. *Oratio* (prayer), is the first ingredient of Luther's recipe for the making of a theologian. For what Tertullian said of Christians especially applies to them; they are not born but made —made by the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Prayer. Therefore, of all men, the theologian must "pray without ceasing." It is the very breath of his life. Here, again, Walther's letters are the best of proof that he cultivated the habit of prayer. They are full of little ejaculatory prayers, half unconscious little petitions and sighs. Even his written prayers, prepared for the opening of congregational and other meetings, a volume of which has been published, show that they were prayed before they were written. The other ingredient of Luther's recipe is *Meditatio* (study). He was a thorough student, above all things of the Scriptures, the inspired word of God. Doctor Piper dwells at length in the above quoted article on Walther's doctrine of inspiration. He says

that Walther, "during his entire activity as a teacher, not only with fullest conviction stood for the old Church doctrine of inspiration, but designated the giving up of this doctrine as the falling away in principle from Christianity." Next to the Scriptures he studied Luther and the Confessions. From the day when he first began to read his collected writings in his father's library and searched them again at the home of Pastor Keyl, at Frohna, when preparing for the Altenburg debate, down to the very end of his life, he studied Luther. He was thus well qualified to prepare a paper for the District Conference of Missouri on "The Fruitful Reading of Luther's Writings," which ends with this advice: *"Man mache sich mit seiner Luther-ausgabe so bekannt, dass man jede Schrift ohne viel zeitraubendes Nachschlagen finden kann"* ("One ought to make one's self so familiar with one's Luther edition, that one can find every writing without much time-robbing paging") (*Lehre und Wehre,* 33, p. 305). The English is stiff, but his meaning is clear. "A pupil of Luther," he says of himself, "and, as I hope to God, a faithful pupil, I have only stammered after this prophet of the last world all that I have hitherto pub-

licly spoken and written."

He was equally well read in the great teachers of the Church, especially the Lutheran fathers of the sixteenth century, whom he regarded as standing much higher in Lutheran orthodoxy than the men of the seventeenth century. He is always quoting them. His edition of "Baier's Compendium," with critical notes and annotations, is proof sufficient of the enormous range of his reading and the thoroughness of his *Meditatio*. But he never slavishly followed any of them. He proved all things with the touchstone of the inspired word, keeping that which is good. While he, with great modesty, preferred that they should speak, and quoted them because he felt that they said things better than he himself could say them, Doctor Piper is undoubtedly right when he says that "Walther, as respects spiritual experience, theological learning, logical acumen, and the gift of presentation, certainly does not stand behind the most of our theologians, and, in our judgment, he surpasses many of them in these things." (*Lehre und Wehre*, 33, p. 266.)

Besides prayer and study, Luther says *Tentatio* (trial) is necessary for the making of a theologian. Scriver in his "Treasury

of Souls," says it like this: "Small clocks only need small weights. But great clocks in high church towers need very heavy weights." In other words, great theologians like Paul, who had his thorn in the flesh, need an especially heavy load of trial. Walther had his. He was rich in tribulation. Sihler, whose ripened experience made him a shrewd observer, noticed it at their first meeting. He said that the expression of his face, although he was only thirty-five, was strangely aged, in all probability through the many and severe conflicts he had to endure. His early religious experience at Leipzig, his trials in his first congregation at Bräunsdorf, the struggle which led up to the determination to emigrate, his relations with Stephan, the fearful disappointment at his hypocrisy, the accusations and suspicions of the people, the doubts which assailed him together with the other pastors and candidates, the jeers and contempt of the world, the privations and conflicts of his first years at Trinity congregation—what a load it was for a high-minded soul with a more than sensitive conscience to carry. Then came the controversy with Grabau and the Buffalo Synod, with Loehe and the Iowa Synod, and, most bitter of all, the controversy within the

Synodical Conference. How these things affected him appears from a letter he wrote to his life-long friend, Doctor Franz Delitzsch, and quoted by the latter in his "Zeitgeschichtliche Gedanken," in the "Pilger aus Sachsen": "Believe me, with my polemics I am very often in the position of Joseph, who spoke roughly unto his brethren, and then went into his chamber to weep out his heart, and only after he had washed his face again showed himself to the people."

To this we must add the bodily weakness and infirmities which necessitated his seeking a cure in Europe, the care of all the churches which came upon him daily, the cares of family life and the boundless sympathy with which he entered into and shared the cares of others. Above all, there were the spiritual trials, the *Anfechtungen,* which at times threw him into deepest despondency, as during that most trying period after the unmasking of Stephan and before the Altenburg debate. He was spared nothing. Whatever reproach came to the Missouri Synod came first to him. No wonder Doctor Sihler called him "*unser General-kreuztraeger*" (Our general crossbearer). No wonder his favorite close to his letters was, "Your companion in tribulation and in the kingdom."

An old friend of his tells how he once came to him, when Walther, with an almost tearful look and the saddest of expressions, greeted him with the words, "Oh, if only I might die!" He later asked Walther what had most helped him in his trials, and he said, "The holy communion."

So there was no lack of *tentatio*, even as there was no lack of *oratio* and *meditatio*. The result was a theologian, a real man of God. Of course, there was a foundation to build on, for God had endowed him with splendid gifts of mind. *Judicium* and *Ingenium,* Guenther calls them (how they love those precise Latin terms!) (judgment and insight), combined with a love of poetry and a feeling for beauty of form and expression; a wonderful memory, a strong will and a hatred of all duplicity and double dealing. With all his talent for organization, he never sacrificed a truth or a principle in the interest of some move or arrangement which expediency might appear to suggest or demand. The compromises of petty Church politicians were most distasteful to him, as they must be to every upright Christian man, and when he had once convinced himself of the truth of a doctrine or correctness of its application, he

was immovable. It was, therefore, but natural that he should have been accused of loving to rule and being unwilling to brook any criticism or contradiction. That his opinion should carry weight and authority, that his advice should be sought and valued, that he should be respected and honored as a teacher and leader, was only to be expected. It would have been most strange if this were not the case. That he ever abused any authority he may have possessed, or refused to receive correction when mistaken, remains to be proved. What can be proved is this: Walther was a most humble Christian. He earnestly sought to know his sins and weaknesses, and to struggle against them. Wherever he unwittingly offended or hurt any man, he was most eager to promptly admit his fault, making the fullest possible apology and seeking pardon. Nor can it be truthfully said that he could brook no contradiction. Any man who was associated with such independent characters as Wyneken, Sihler, Craemer, Lange and Fuerbringer, was bound to meet with contradiction and criticism. But he not only accepted it from them. He humbly and cheerfully accepted it from the most simple layman. On one occasion a Christian woman in a Michi-

gan congregation directed his attention to a certain paragraph of his "Pastoral Theology," warning him, if he acted otherwise, that he would be guilty of a grave error of judgment and do a great wrong. He gratefully received the warning and acted upon the advice. He possessed none of that cold reserve almost unconsciously acquired by men whose very eminence compels them to stand alone. A cultured Christian gentleman, he ever "let his moderation be known to all men," and was especially courteous and friendly with people who chanced to occupy a station inferior to his own. His more blunt *Plattdeutsch* friend, Wyneken, called him "*dieser hoefliche Sachse*" ("this polite Saxon"). "Please," he writes to his son-in-law, Keyl, "also greet for me most solicitously and respectfully your splendid house-friend, Mr. Westerward, who has become so dear to me, and again express to him my most sincere thanks for all the undeserved kindnesses shown me." Mr. Westerward had, without his knowledge, gotten him sleeping car tickets from New York to St. Louis. Then, for fear that he may have overlooked something, he adds, "Finally also greet your dear housemaid for me." If she, after the German custom, brushed his coat

or handed him his hat, the "polite Saxon" would try to remember it for a lifetime. These gifts, sanctified by the spirit of prayer, disciplined by unremitting study of the word, ripened by Christian experience of trial, made him a great theologian in a Church of theologians.

He thus needed no doctor's degree to become a "teacher of teachers" in the Church. He was that from the very first day of his activities as professor at the little school of the prophets which in 1850 was removed from Perry County to St. Louis, and which housed its six seminarists and ten students under one roof with their teacher. While the intimate relations thus induced could not possibly continue, he always remained the spiritual father of the entire student body, solicitous not merely to establish in them a clear, precise knowledge of Christian doctrine, but, above all, to influence their hearts and consciences. Doctor Piper says: "Most of his students will doubtless testify that they, through his theological instructions, received rich furtherance in their spiritual life. All his teaching was at the same time both instructive and edifying. One or the other of his pupils came to a living faith in Christ just in his lecture room."

He ever insisted that there could be no true enlightening without conversion, and urged the necessity as a *conditio sine qua non* of deep personal piety and the striving after holiness of living. "The unconverted minister will not dare present too plain a picture out of God's word of a true or false Christian, for he must fear that his hearers will say, "You yourself are not like this," or "Just like you." This especially applies to his *Lutherstunden,* gatherings of the student body, held once a week apart from the regular lectures, in which he talked to the young men as a father would to his sons. "O God," he prays, "preserve us a pious ministry!"

It has been said that the clergy of the Missouri Synod "always speak and move as one man," which can only mean that they have like convictions and act upon them. They owe this to the thoroughness of the theological training received at Walther's hands. It was impossible for a man to sit through his lectures on Dogmatics without thoroughly knowing the doctrines of his Church, just as it was impossible for a man to attend his lectures on Pastoral Theology without attaining some measure of pastoral wisdom and judgment. He had a marvel-

ous gift for clear, precise statement. "Walther's own elucidations," says Doctor Piper, "as respects clearness and sharpness of conception, not only do not stand behind those of the old teachers, but Walther's presentation very often first makes the matter real plain."

Nor did his instructions cease when his students left the seminary. At the meetings of Synod, as at conference; in *Lehre und Wehre* and the *Lutheraner,* in theological opinions and a most voluminous correspondence, he, like a good householder, continued to bring forth out of the inexhaustible treasury of his rich knowledge of the truth things old and new for the edification and inspiration of his spiritual children. His one purpose in life was the glorifying of God through the upbuilding of the gospel kingdom of Jesus Christ, and he seldom failed to impart something of his spirit and zeal to every man privileged to sit at his feet. His zeal for missions sent his students out into the most distant lanes and byways of the great new field of the farthest west, and he never presented an appeal for help but what some young man arose and asked to be sent. Wherever they went, his writings followed them, and so the circle of his influence was

widened until it extended far beyond the Church of America, to Europe, South America, Australia, New Zealand, Asia and Africa. Letters, thanking him for his writings, came to him from the most out-of-the-way places and from the strangest persons.

"In writing he ever had but one interest, to really serve the Church with his labors. He never wrote merely for the sake of writing, or to parade his gifts and learning, or for the pleasure of controversy and criticism," said the editor of the *Gemeindeblatt* (the official organ of the Wisconsin Synod), "but the present actual needs of the Church, especially the Lutheran Church of our country, determined the choice of the subjects which he treated. And great was the blessing which God laid upon Walther's faithful and industrious labors." Their extent cannot be measured merely by the books and articles published over his signature. The doctrinal discussions of the Synods, for which he prepared theses, printed in voluminous reports, the sermonic material of the *Homiletical Magazine,* now in its forty-eighth year, the writings of other men printed at Concordia Publishing House, were all more or less suggested, inspired and influenced by him.

Walther was not only a great theologian and a great writer; he was also a great preacher. The estimate of Doctor A. Broemel, in his "Homiletic Character Pictures," has often been quoted. Still, it is so eminently just and so strikingly correct that the temptation to quote it again is irresistible. "Walther," he writes, "is as orthodox as John Gerhard, but also as fervent as a Pietist; as correct in form as a university or court preacher, and yet as popular as Luther himself. If the Lutheran Church would again spread its teachings among the people, then it will have to be as faithful and certain in doctrine and as inviting and timely in form as is the case with Walther. Walther is a model preacher in the Lutheran Church. How different the position of the Lutheran Church would be in Germany if many such sermons were held!"

"The means through which Walther attains such impressive results, is, of course, not the form, but the content of his sermons. As a good Lutheran he preaches the whole word of God. He has no pet thoughts. He preaches, with most faithful conviction, the entire content of Scripture, and just this is the gratifying thing. He sacrifices not a jot or tittle of the Scriptures."

"Again and again he comes back to justification by faith alone."

"Because he so loves to speak of reconciliation with God as the most blessed of mysteries, and himself therein lives and moves, he for this reason so impressively urges that one suffer one's self to be reconciled. When he comes to speak of this his speech becomes very vivacious and insistent."

"Naturally, the fountains of grace are for him the word and the sacraments alone. With immovable firmness he clings to the word."

"Therefore he points all to the word; Here heaven is opened, the heart of God disclosed."

"Walther, however, does not weaken the necessity of sanctification."

The *Allgemeine Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirchenzeitung,* of Leipzig, in its issue of June 22, 1887, said this: "With him one of the great ones of the Church of Christ is gone home, a man who was not only an epoch-making personality in the ecclesiastical history of America, and there a pre-eminent leader and gatherer of the Lutherans, but whose activities were felt as a mighty inspiration by the Lutheran Church of all continents."

"As a preacher he distinguished himself through a warm heartiness, and often through a moving, gripping power, but he clothed his thoughts in a model form of clear, logical development. He was thoroughly doctrinal, still anything but doctrinaire; everything had its practical point. The two postils, of which the *Gospelpostil* received its eighth edition in eleven years, and 23,000 copies of which were distributed, besides being translated into Norwegian, show him to have been a theologian who out of ripe experience and indefatigable study gave the congregation that which he himself had experienced and upon which he rested his life. For him the central point of his sermons, as well as all his addresses and writings, is the Lutheran doctrine of justification. In Lutheranism he recognized the continuance of the Apostolic Church; it was, therefore, his aim to lead back the Lutheran Church to its starting point, to the doctrine of the Reformation drawn from the word of God."

It would be most interesting to know how he prepared his sermons, what he read, how he wrote and memorized them, how much time he devoted to their preparation, etc. Perhaps Doctor Piper may be persuaded to write an article on Doctor C. F. W. Walther

as a preacher. After having described him as a theologian this should certainly follow. Guenther has an interesting quotation on this from Pastor C. A. Brauer, and from several of his letters, among them a letter written to Wyneken in 1871. His letters to Stephanus Keyl (Vol. I, pp. 130 and 175), should also be read in this connection. Pastor Otto Hanser, in his "Irrfahrten und Heimfahrten," also has an interesting note (p. 265). All testify that the preparation and delivery of his sermons cost him almost infinite pains and labor. He writes to Wyneken: "I am, as always, in great distress, for I must again preach"; and to Pastor Brauer. "You go at the preparing of a sermon with pleasure; I, as a rule, with the anxiety of death." His own estimate of his sermons was by no means flattering to their author. He writes to Stephanus Keyl: "I have quite completed my sermon, but it so much displeases me that I wish I were not compelled to deliver it. With respect to sermons, one also again and again experiences: 'So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.' Help to call upon God, that He may aid me at least not to spoil the festival; I, too, will not forget you."

He speaks of spoiling a festival with a poor sermon. Hanser quotes him as saying of sermons for festival seasons: "Then a pastor dare not spare himself. Then he must give his congregation the very best that is in him, for the festival seasons are the harvest times of the Church." While he was still pastor of Trinity, it was most common for educated, unchurchly Germans to attend the services on festival days, not because they cared for the content of his sermons, but merely for the pleasure his beautiful language and perfect style afforded them.

Sermon books are very short-lived. The shelves of most second-hand bookstores are crowded with antiquated sermons of forgotten worthies. Walther's sermons are as fresh and timely to-day as they were fifty years ago. They will be read and studied when most of the sermon material put forth during the past century has found its inevitable way to the second-hand booksellers' shelves. For Walther was and will remain a prince of preachers.

Chapter 26

Relations with Other Men

"Luther and His Friends" is the title of a fascinating little book written by Pastor A. G. Frey, who describes the great reformer in his relations with other great men.

A strong man always surrounds himself with strong men. This is a real test of character, and one reason for our saying that "a man is known by the company he keeps." The man who kept company with the Elector Frederick, who refused the crown of the Holy Roman Empire; and John Frederick, the Confessor; with Melanchthon, the "Preceptor of Germany"; with Bugenhagen, Cruciger, Jonas, Coelius and others, was never a weakling.

Some day a similar book will be written, describing Walther in his relations with other men—Loeber, Buenger, Brohm, Sihler, Wyneken, Fuerbringer, Craemer, Lochner, Schaller, Lange, Brauer, Fick, Schwan, Ottesen, Preus, Delitzsch, Kliefoth, Rudelbach, Harms, Marbach and Vehse. It, too, should make fascinating reading, if only the writing of it is not too long delayed. When the

fathers have entered into their rest and the little intimate anecdotes, which so often more strikingly characterize a man than an elaborate treatise, are forgotten, it will be too late.

It is said that these fathers sometimes clashed; not on questions of doctrine, but on questions pertaining to the organization and administration of Synod. Then their meetings extended far into the night. These meetings must have been battles royal, for "there were giants in those days." But Walther was not the man to permit these differences of opinion to disturb or mar the cordial relations of which he writes to Pastor Fick: "Your faithful friendship humbles me, for I too much feel that I am undeserving of it; still I will pray God to graciously preserve it unto me." Nor did he hesitate to follow after a friend in order to prevent a possible estrangement. He tells Fick, excusing himself for not having visited him, that he had used the one opportunity which offered to visit Fuerbringer, because he feared that "the difference which had arisen might become a dangerous break, and Fuerbringer, with his uncommon gifts, knowledge and experience, be lost to our Church. I thus visited him, and, by God's grace, all again

stands well. He is completely satisfied and reconciled." (Letters, Vol. I, p. 61.) This splendid trait of Christian character also appears from other letters, e.g., his letter to Brauer (Vol. I, p. 172), and to Sihler (Vol. II, p. 124). A man who can thus swallow his pride is uncommonly gifted with the grace of Christian humility. Guenther also describes Walther as being a most humble Christian, and illustrates this by pointing to expressions in his letters, e.g., his farewell letter to the congregation before leaving for Europe in 1860, and to his address of acceptance when his degree of Doctor of Divinity was conferred upon him. He also points to his having refused to accept a dwelling erected for him on a small lot he owned near the college grounds, and insisted upon giving up the lot in order that the property might be sold and the money returned to the donors. Without criticising Guenther, it may be said that a stronger proof is the incident related in the same connection: It once happened that Walther had been somewhat harsh to others, and hastened to make most humble and almost abject apologies. The pastor who relates the incident said to Walther that he had admitted too much. Walther replied; "God grant it may not harm

the person offended. I would rather admit too much than too little; for my only desire is to be saved." A man of Walther's standing and influence who possesses this disposition, may truthfully be said to be humble.

His humility prompted him not only generously but most unstintedly to recognize and appreciate the gifts and attainments of others. How vividly he describes Buenger's gifts as a missionary! With what appreciation he speaks of Craemer! How he urges Fuerbringer, because of his peculiar qualifications, to write a work on Lutheran Apologetics for people of culture! How he praises Fick's literary gifts! How unqualifiedly he admits his indebtedness to Doctor Vehse's *Protestations-schrift* at the Altenburg debate! His tribute to Charles Porterfield Krauth, at the occasion of his death, is printed in the January number of *Lehre und Wehre,* for 1883. Walther writes: "There has just come to us the affecting news that Doctor Charles Porterfield Krauth, at about noon, January 2, fell asleep, aged fifty-nine years. Herewith a heavy blow is fallen, not only upon the General Council, to which the deceased belonged, but at the same time upon the whole American Lutheran Church. For the blessed one (*der Selige*) was indeed the

most prominent man in the English Lutheran Church of this country, a man of unusual learning, at home not less in the old than in the new theology, and, what is the chief thing, in hearty accord with the doctrine of his Church, as he had learned to know it; a noble man without guile." After briefly pointing to Doctor Krauth's public confession of faith and solemn retraction of any and all previous erroneous statements (*Lutheran and Missionary,* July 13, 1865), Walther goes on to say: "As everywhere, especially in the circle of his activities, the visible fruit of his continued, undaunted and clear testimony and indefatigable labor, particularly within the English Lutheran Church, will be the permanent legacy which he, at his departing from the Church militant, left her; thus he at the same time with this retraction, even as once Augustine, has left an imperishable monument of the uprightness of his conviction. We adore the inscrutable government of God in this death. It was our judgment that the Lord would through this highly gifted instrument just at this moment bless our American Lutheran Church." Much might be said of his relations with Ottesen and Preus, of the Norwegian Synod; with Doctor Delitzsch, the great Hebrew

scholar, and with Doctor Marbach, his opponent at Altenburg. But that must be left to the man who writes the book on "Walther and his Friends."

Some men make friends without being able to keep them. Usually selfishness or self-interest is the explanation of their loss. Walther kept his friends, which is but another way of saying that he was one of the most unselfish and disinterested of men. The poverty and privations of his early ministry at Trinity congregation were borne without a word of complaint. In his greatest poverty he always stood ready to extend the most generous Christian hospitality to any of the brethren who might be in need. The three chairs and one table with which he set up housekeeping are characteristic. There was one for Emilie, one for himself, and one for the unbidden but ever welcome guest. Lochner, who, because of his testimony was compelled to leave his congregation in 1846, and who was promptly invited by Walther to his home, says: "It was hard for me to be compelled to so long use his so cordially offered and extended hospitality, because I saw how frugally things often went with him." Then he goes on to tell how Walther, lacking money to buy fuel, could not

heat the one of the three rented rooms he used as a study, and did his work in the combination family, living and sleeping room. The few rooms he occupied with his family in the first college building were not much more commodious nor comfortable. He here, for full five months, entertained a German theologian with his family at a time when his table, at which several students also regularly sat, more than once lacked bread, until a baker of his congregation, seeing the circumstances, made full and abundant provision. To ease Lochner's mind, he told him: "We esteem it an undeserved honor to be privileged to receive a servant of Jesus Christ and our dear Church driven away for the sake of the truth." (Letters, Vol. I, pp. 25-35.) He comforted the German theologian by telling him that it was exceedingly important for him to become thoroughly acquainted with American conditions before accepting a call (which was slow in coming), and that he thanked God who had given him grace and counted him worthy to serve him. The essence of hospitality does not consist in the abundance with which a man decks his table. It rather consists in the spirit with which he shares a crust of bread.

At the same time Walther declined to ac-

cept one cent of remuneration for his many books and writings. Had he done so (and who can deny him the right?) he might have left a considerable fortune to his family, for his writings brought the Synod, through Concordia Publishing House, thousands upon thousands of dollars. With supreme disinterestedness he placed all of his talents fully and completely into the service of the Church, and thus contributed materially to the support and development of its missions and educational institutions. The short note on the title page of his "Gospelpostil," "Any profit flows into the Synodical treasury," applied all the way through. For himself he asked only a frugal living, which was provided by the payment of a moderate salary to him as pastor and professor. Out of this he regularly gave fixed amounts for certain purposes, and made most generous contributions in response to special appeals. Some people consider it a disgrace to die rich. Walther seems to have considered it a disgrace for a servant of the Church to even attempt to gain riches. He was content to depend for his few needs fully and without reserve upon the Christian liberality of the people whom he so unselfishly served.

The faithfulness and loyalty of his friend-

ship, like his generosity, knew no bounds. This is the true explanation of the statement sometimes made that he was no judge of character. He was often deceived and sometimes betrayed. But this did not embitter him or rob him of confidence in his fellowmen.

The following statement is characteristic. Speaking of a man who had most grossly deceived him, and whom he had loyally defended as long as it was possible to do so, Walther writes:

"You ask, dear reader, 'Do we regret having received the unfortunate Preuss as long as we could do so?' We reply, 'No, we do not regret it. It is the manner of Christians to suffer their love to be deceived but never their faith. True, in experience, mistrustful, suspicious souls are, as a rule, sustained because men are so evil; but the mistrustful are not for this reason right, because love, as long as it can, believes only the best of its neighbor.' " (*Lutheraner,* Vol. 28, p. 75.)

"There was in his character a peculiar combination of softness and hardness," says a writer in the *Allgemeine Evang. Luth. Kirchenzeitung.* In this he was like Luther, who in one moment could hurl defiance at

pope and emperor, include Duke George and the prince of darkness himself, and in another sit down at his table to indulge himself in the intimate chats recorded by Cordatus, Lauterbach and Aurifaber. Most tolerant of any innocent weakness or helplessness, he was quick to resent any duplicity or injustice, especially if it worked injury to others. When it came to defending the revealed truth of God's holy word, he stood like a granite crag. The slightest attempt to contradict or call into question the great fundamental doctrines of the Church immediately called forth his most uncompromising opposition. The sacrifice of a truth or the compromise of a principle was a simple impossibility.

On the other hand, this man who, when occasion required, could, like Joseph, speak so roughly with his brethren, could be the most delightful of companions. His perfect courtesy and polished manners, his wide reading and rich experience, his knowledge of music and literature, his refined taste for all things beautiful, combined to make him a wonderful entertainer, the soul and life of any gathering at which he might happen to be. His kindness and deference to others appears in almost every letter he ever wrote.

Like Luther, he was a lover of the little things of nature. He kept a bird in his room which he cared for himself, and whenever he was compelled to leave home for any length of time, most solicitously commended to the care of his family. This bird, together with his *Schlafrock* and long pipe, remain in the memory of every student who ever went to Walther's study to read him a sermon for criticism. In a letter to his son Ferdinand, he describes the coming of spring with its beautiful green, its buds and flowers and its joyous choir of winged songsters (Vol. I, p. 218). He writes to his wife, who, with their children at the outbreak of war, had left St. Louis to stay in the country, and gives her a very complete report on the state of their home kitchen garden, including a berry patch on an adjoining lot, their cow and Frau Hefele's butter making.

These traits of character, his Christian humility, generosity and unselfishness, his broad charity, fairness and noble disinterestedness, his uprightness, integrity and faithfulness, his hatred of all duplicity and political manipulations, his unfailing courtesy and refined cordiality of manner, determined his relations not only with his more intimate friends, but with men in the wider circles

of Church life in America and Europe. To again use his own figure, he did indeed, like Joseph, at times speak roughly with his erring brethren. But, like Joseph, he never forgot that they were his brethren, children of the same father. It might be necessary for him to sit at a separate table, but he did not sit apart by preference or without deploring the necessity of such separation. And when he sent them good things from his own table, he did this not to show his superior richness, but rather to express his ardent wish that they all as brethren might together share in the riches with which God had so abundantly blessed him.

This is the spirit that prompts Walther to write to Sihler of his longing for the most careful preservation of catholicity and the avoidance of every kind of separatism. (Vol. I, p. 6.) He writes in a similar strain to Brohm: "I must admit to you that I have lost all timidity for the sake of dead orthodoxists to keep in view the *Quilibet praesumitur bonus* in the *Lutheraner*. May unreasoning zealots, proud, carnal watchmen of Zion, continue to imagine that I am capitulating with the errorists. I cannot allow this to prevent my dealing gently with the youth Absalom. It must be kept well in mind how

little opportunity most so-called Lutheran ministers have had here to learn the true doctrine and its history; if one immediately casts them aside one completely closes all access to their hearts; if they, however, see that one does not at once impute obdurateness to them, they are certainly much more ready to hear. America is plainly a field where many a plant may yet prosper if it be carefully tended." (Vol. I, p. 21.)

He was thinking of individual pastors, congregations and groups of congregations. Let us give his words a wider application. America is indeed a field where many a plant may prosper. But the most marvelous of all plants is the tender shoot so solicitously tended by Walther, the Church of the pure word and unadulterated sacraments, the Church whose motto he took for his own when he lived and labored and died, *"Soli Deo Gloria."* By God's gracious leadings it is now become a mighty tree. May this brief and imperfect sketch of the faith and life of the "true Peace-Theologian," Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther, inspire us who are its children, to faithfully labor and pray for the magnificent goal he set himself, "the final realization of one united Evangelical Lutheran Church of North America."

LUTHERAN S[illegible] [illegible]LARY MAYWOOD, ILL.

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Steffens, D.H. (Diedrich Henry),
Doctor Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm
Walther : "ein rechter Friedens

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Steffens

AUTHOR

Dr. Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther

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DATE LOANED	BORROWER'S NAME	DATE RETURNED
APR 16 '72	[signature]	
DEC 8 1972	D. Worrell-LSTC	
MAR 6 1973	GARRISON	
NOV 4 1973	F E Lay	
MAR 9 [illegible]	[illegible]	

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